

# THE DIEFLIST

## Unlocking Stronghold

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Player's Guide  
The Illustrated Story

Best of 1997

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Review and Card List

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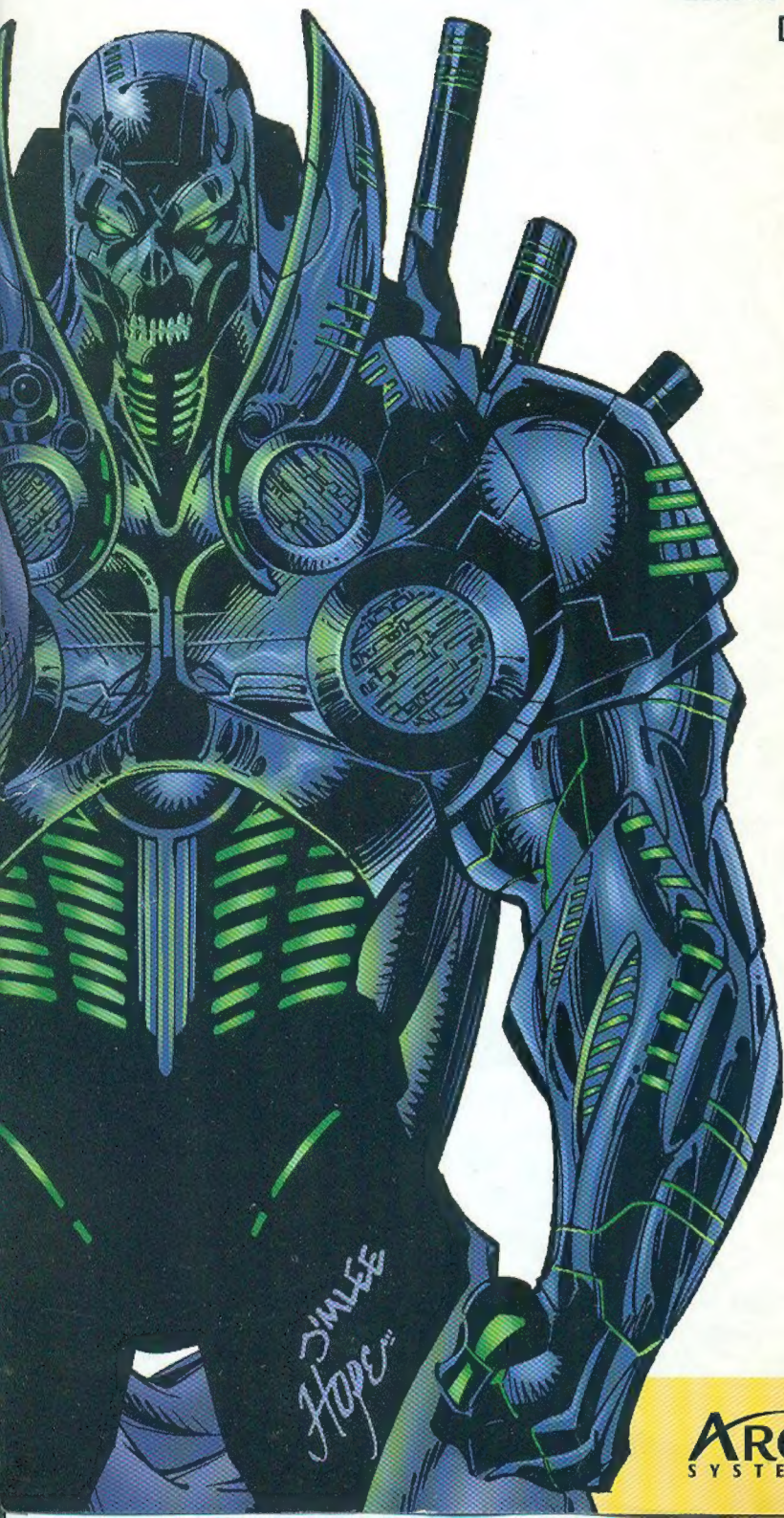
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## We're Listening

**OFTEN USE THIS SPACE** to discuss what my co-workers and I do to improve the game of **Magic**. This issue, let's focus the spotlight outside Wizards' walls. What impact do all of you, the players, have on the game? I'm not talking about **Magic** players as one large group. Obviously, the success of the game is directly connected to the number of people playing it. I'm referring to the effect one person—you—can have on decisions made here at Wizards of the Coast.

For starters, let me tell you a big secret: Everyone here cares what you think. From design to art to flavor text, all the people working on **Magic** try to make something you'll enjoy. How do we know if we succeed? Feedback. We crave it like a drug.

When *Tempest* first came out, I went to a Prerelease. Why? I wanted to see people's faces as they opened up their packs. I wanted to hear which cards excited them. I wanted to know what flavor text made players laugh, and whether the story intrigued them.

And I'm not alone. Everyone here watches to see what you think. Many of us read Usenet newsgroups daily. I turn to the **Magic Dojo** to read up on the latest strategies, then take a peak at Land of Destoguardiana's Tracing Department to see what secrets have slipped out the door. I visit Squee's home page just to enjoy the fact that he has one. I also occasionally visit the channel <#mtg> on IRC to chat one-on-one with players.

In addition, I go to tournaments and events to meet people, and I always look through *Duelist* reply cards to see what readers think. We actively seek feedback. If you want something changed or want it to stay, let us know. How do you do that? Here are some possibilities:

➤ **Usenet Newsgroups:** Post on either <rec.games.trading-cards.magic.misc> or <rec.games.trading-cards.magic.strategy>

and note in your subject line that you want us to read it (try putting [Wizards] before the thread name).

➤ **Email:** Wizards of the Coast Customer Service is <custserv@wizards.com>, *The Duelist* is <duelist@wizards.com>, and I'm <woody@wizards.com> (be aware that due to the amount of mail I receive, I can't reply to every letter).

➤ **Listservs:** Wizards hosts several listservs (email lists), including one devoted to discussing *The Duelist*. Check out the **Magic "Resources"** page on the Wizards website at <www.wizards.com/Magic> for information.

➤ **Web Pages:** My favorite is **The Magic Dojo** at <www.thedojo.com>, but we peruse many sites.

➤ **Letters:** Send a letter to us. If it's well written, there's a good chance we'll print it. See the "Letters" column on page 12.

➤ **Reply Cards:** Fill them out, both in *The Duelist* and in starter decks. Remember, we look at hundreds of replies; hand-written comments get noticed.

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The best way for us to know if we're meeting your needs and expectations is to get your reaction. We're listening, but we can't hear what isn't said.

*Mark Rosewater*  
MARK ROSEWATER  
Editor in Chief

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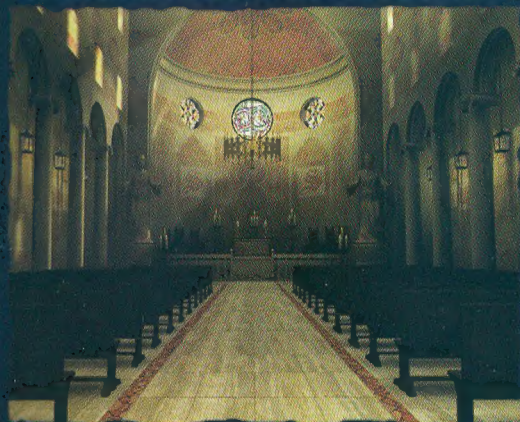
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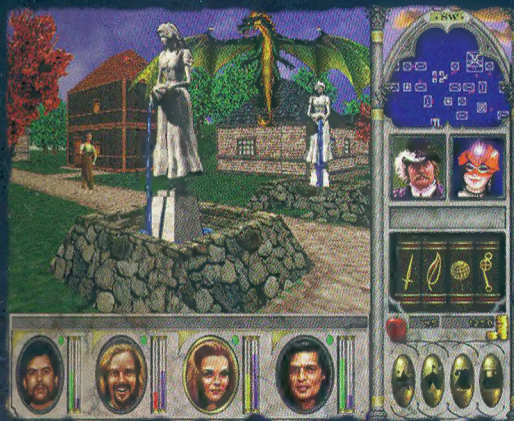
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**This Issue Brought to You By:** Kenneth Starr, incessant rain, fire, mocha, Jason Goodman, the big Smoooooooooth, Groo, Twonky, Terrific Tuesdays, the unlocked cage, the number 4, and the words "oobie, doobie."

**Thanks to:** Brian and his absent wife, Elizabeth and Dane for the time away, Diana Sexton for selling the house, TNT, bandaids, Asia from Tukwila with the knee brace, little Viennas, chili cheese dip, beer, Matt Groening, and the good folks at Renton Honda.

## A Background in Blood



BARBARA FISHER

Cover artist **Ron Spencer** has worked many jobs over the years—although one in particular may have influenced his interpretation of Crovax the Cursed.

"I used to get by pulling shoulder blades out of sides of beef all day," the 34-year-old Spencer tells us. "I also worked construction, printed T-shirts, and even worked in a bleach factory."

Spencer's work should be familiar to **Magic** players. In addition to this month's cover, he illustrated Necrite from *Fallen Empires*, Hammer of Bogardan from *Mirage*, Serpent Warrior from *Stronghold*, as well as the ever-popular Terror. "Originally, I thought the picture was vertical, so I drew this guy down in the left corner. Then I saw the card and realized the guy was now floating up in the air." No matter, the art is still quite effective. He also illustrates for other games, including *Legend of the Five Rings*, *Vampire: The Eternal Struggle*, and the werewolf game *Rage*. The last two seem especially suited to his uniquely graphic work.

Spencer achieves a distinctive look through an eclectic use of mixed media. This month's cover, for instance, was created with everything from colored pencils to ball-point pens, and watercolors to acrylic paint. He also has a tendency to feature characters

that seem to be missing, for lack of a better word, skin. "That's just my inexperienced knowledge of anatomy rearing its head. I know it's not necessarily how a formally trained artist would do it."

Spencer did get a little training at a two-year college in Idaho, although he says what he really learned in school was that in order to succeed, an artist needs to "shut off the TV and stay up until 3 A.M." He still lives in Aurora, Nebraska, where he was born, with his wife of 12 years and what will soon be five children (one's on the way—right now he has "four and a half.") His inspiration varies depending on the subject matter, but some of his favorite work includes the



visually photographic style of

Richard Corben (a popular sci-fi and fantasy illustrator who often works with Dark Horse Comics) and *Swamp Thing* illustrator Bernie Wrightson.

What was his inspiration for this cover? "Well, it was money in the bank, actually," he claims. This is not his first encounter with the crew of the *Weatherlight*, however. He also illustrated the Crovax *Vanguard* card

and the new Ransack card from *Stronghold*. Spencer often uses the same models for his illustrations, Dave Smidt and Dave's wife Millie. Both are featured on Ransack as Gerrard and Mirri, and Dave modeled for this cover (who would have thought that Gerrard and Crovax had so much in common?). Millie Smidt can also be seen on Volrath's Shapeshifter. "They're just beautiful people—and it's always nice to know a woman with a washboard stomach."

For the foreseeable future, Ron Spencer will no doubt continue to be one of the popular artists in the field. Although, as he says, "If it comes down to it, I'll just paint on cave walls." 🐉

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- Wizards of the Coast's innovative **ARC System** and the exciting new **C•23 TCG**
- Complete coverage of *The Duelist Invitational*
- Exclusive *Duelist* fiction—Part Three of Kij Johnson's "Sisay's Quest"
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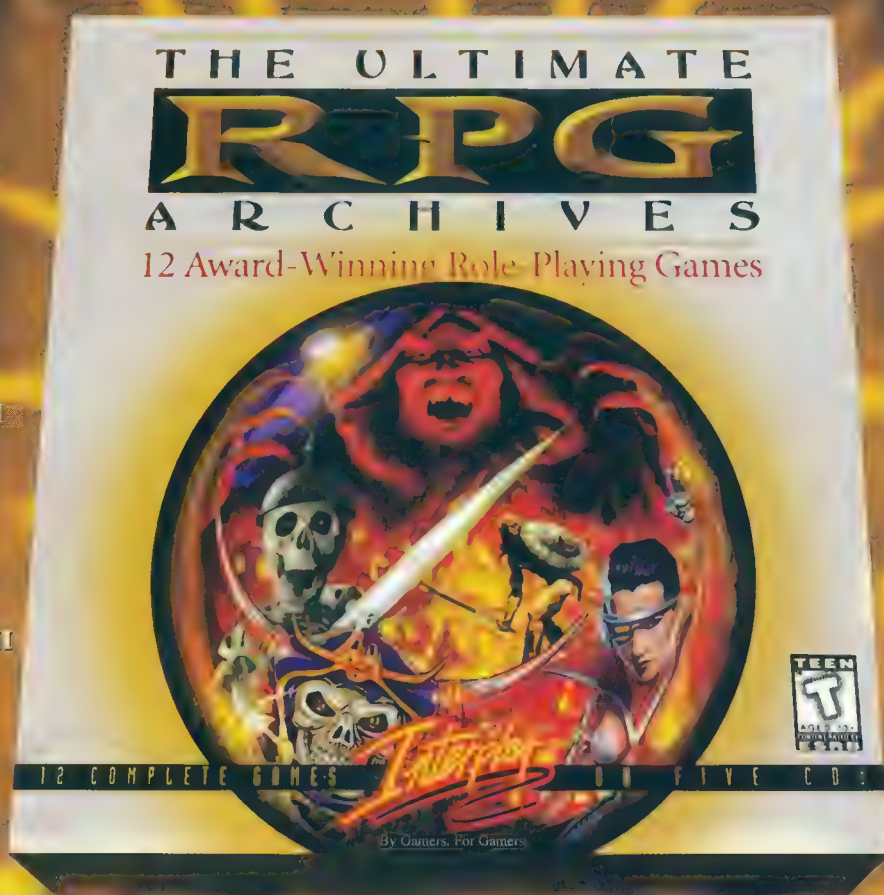
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A dramatic scene from a video game. In the upper half, a large, scaly dragon with glowing orange eyes and a long, pointed tongue is breathing fire. Below it, a mechanical flying creature with a spherical body and multiple limbs is firing three bright energy beams. The background is a dark, stormy sky with a bright orange and yellow glow at the bottom, suggesting a sunset or a fire on the ground. In the lower half, a dark, flat-topped mountain range is visible under the same glow.

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# LETTERS

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## Teaching New Tricks

We were all there once. As an average player, you find a good theme or combo to build a deck around, but you have a problem filling out the deck with stuff that works well with the combo. Often newer players will overlook simple cards like Stone Rain in their red decks to help slow down opponents until they can get out that Shivan. I'd like to see some more articles aimed at making good players great players. Maybe an add-on to "Picks and Tricks" where you take combos and build simple decks around them. I would like to see a section to help these players get to the next level. I sincerely hope "Drafting Table" comes out that way. So far it looks like a step in the right direction.

Troy Abelseth  
Rapid City, South Dakota

THE PRESSURES of space and monthly deadlines probably won't allow us to add a "Picks and Tricks" strategy article any time soon, but this does seem like a good topic for Eric Tam to tackle in "The Drafting Table."

## I Contest That

I'd like to know why *The Duelist* contests aren't valid in Mexico?

Victor Basurto  
Mexico City, Mexico

MANY FOREIGN countries and provinces (and Rhode Island) have stringent consumer protection laws for contests (to protect you from "nasty" people who want to give you prizes). These laws force companies to either jump through numerous legal hoops (often including

registering each contest with the government) or exclude those areas from the contest.

## SHOW ME THE MANA CONTEST

Win a display box of Stronghold by finding this mana symbol hidden in your *Duelist* magazine. Drop us a postcard telling us where you found it, and send your entry to The *Duelist* Mana Symbol—#24, P.O. Box 707, Renton, WA 98057-0707. Only postcards will be accepted as legal entries. The winner will be drawn randomly from a pool of correct entries. Postmark deadline is April 18, 1998. Remember, the mana symbol must match this symbol (♠) shown here!

Contest only open to residents of United States (except Rhode Island) and Canada (except Quebec).

## Blacklight District

I was wondering why some Magic cards are blacklight sensitive and some are not. One theory is that because Magic cards are made in different countries the inks they use or laminations may be different.

DJ Koval  
Washburn, Wisconsin

SOME PAPER STOCK contains UV brighteners to make the paper appear whiter than it really is. These brighteners glow under a black light. Why some cards use this "special" brightener and others do not is a larger mystery. You've found the first clue, DJ. Keep searching. The truth is out there!

## Reality Bytes

Although I usually agree with Richard Garfield's "Lost in the Shuffle" article, I disagreed with "A Game by Any Other Name" (*Duelist* #21, p. 112). A game is anything that involves conflict and some of the attributes of real life. Whether the conflict is you versus friend or you versus demon, it's conflict.

I think computer and video games, in addition to RPGs—the two types Garfield classified as "different" games—are the most prominent games. Computer RPGs are the ultimate form of games. Conflict all over the place, and real-life features (it makes me wish that it's real).

Thomas Joseph Webb  
Wrightwood, California

I BELIEVE Richard was merely trying to describe the difference between games played against other people with some clear means of deciding a winner (like chess) and "other" games that fall outside that definition (like RPGs and computer games). How closely the game emulates real life did not enter into the equation. But, if you truly want to live in a world like *Diablo* or *Quake*, maybe you

should think about getting out and seeing the sun a little more often.

## Going Postal

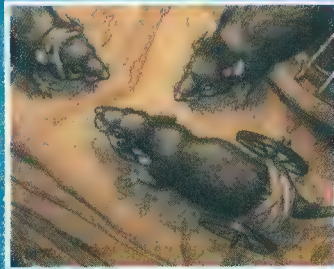
I recently received my issue #21 with the over-sized Shivan Dragon card. The military postal distribution office had blithely folded the magazine, and the plainly visible over-sized Shivan to fit in my mail slot. When I asked why, and if he would stop folding my magazine in the future, the clerk replied, "No guarantee. Maybe." He then shrugged and added "It didn't say 'Do Not Fold.'"

I ask that you start having wrappers for *The Duelist* (with any cards inside) labeled "Do Not Fold" for the benefit of these challenged individuals, and the health of my cards.

Arasin T. Staubly  
Holloman AFB, New Mexico

UNFORTUNATELY, it is not currently possible for us to label the wrapper and I truly doubt that an "indubidual" of this caliber would even be able to follow such simple directions anyway. Let me know if the replacement Shivan I sent you got folded as well (I labeled that one by hand).

Comments? Questions?  
**Are you pondering...?**



Send your thoughts to "Letters," c/o *The Duelist*, P.O. Box 707, Renton, WA 98057-0707, or to [duelist@wizards.com](mailto:duelist@wizards.com).

Please include your name, address, and phone number for verification purposes. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

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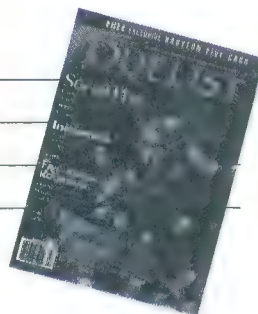
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## C•23 Unites Comics and Trading Card Games

**W**izards of the Coast and WildStorm Productions have combined adventure gaming expertise with creative comic book artwork in an exciting new project. These two industry leaders plan to release their newest property—**C•23**—simultaneously as a trading card game (TCG) and a comic book series this April.

According to Kevin Maples, associate brand manager of the **C•23** TCG, “**C•23** is a premiere collectable trading card game created with the intention of bridging the gap between game players and comic book fans.”

**C•23 Trading Card Game.** **C•23** plays much like a traditional TCG and features story and comic art by Jim Lee, famous comic book artist and co-founder of Image Comics. Set in a post-apocalyptic science fiction world where humanity is segregated into two factions, **C•23** is a two-player game in which players attempt to control cybernetically enhanced or genetically engineered characters. The initial **C•23** set features over 160 cards that will be sold in 40-card starter decks and 12-card booster packs. Suggested retail prices are \$5.99 for starters and \$2.49 for boosters.

**C•23 Comics.** The background for the **C•23** comic book series was developed by Jim Lee and Brandon Choi, the team responsible for creating such major comic properties as *Gen13* and *WildC.A.T.S: Covert Action Teams*. WildStorm Productions is Jim Lee’s branch of Image Comics, the third largest comic book publisher in North America. The far-future action of **C•23** takes place on an Earth dramatically altered by global catastrophe. Lee begins with the tale of Corbin, the hero of the first eight-issue story arc, who attempts to unite the two human factions and bring an end to the generations-old conflict. But to bridge the two camps, Corbin must first learn the secrets of his own heritage.

**ARC System.** The **C•23** TCG is the flagship game for Wizards of the Coast’s new **ARC System**. Developed by Wizards, the **ARC System** is a set of TCGs

that can all be played with each other. Each game will feature a unique storyline to enhance play and strategy. Other TCGs in the **ARC System** include **Xena: Warrior Princess** and **Hercules: The Legendary Journeys** (which will premiere in the months following the **C•23** release). The interchangeable nature of the **ARC System** will allow players to pit Xena against the son of Zeus, or determine what impact Hercules might have on the battle raging in the **C•23** universe.

Watch for more information on the **ARC System**, **C•23**, and the **Xena: Warrior Princess** and **Hercules: The Legendary Journeys** TCGs in future issues of *The Duelist*. You can also learn more at the **Wizards C•23** Web page at <[www.wizards.com/C23](http://www.wizards.com/C23)>. For more information on WildStorm’s products and services, check their website at <[www.wildstorm.com](http://www.wildstorm.com)>.



## Magic Appears in Guinness Book of World Records

The Magic Pro Tour has reached yet another milestone. Shortly after the 1997 Magic World Championships received national coverage on ESPN2, Wizards of the Coast learned that *The Guinness Book of World Records* will list Australian Tom Chanpheng



in its 1998 edition as the youngest Magic: The Gathering World Champion in tournament history.

Chanpheng became the 1996 Magic World Champion at age 19 in August 1996. The young Australian weathered six rounds of competition in a field of 125 players representing 28 countries to become one of the Top 8 fin-

ishers, advancing to the single-elimination finals. After winning quarterfinal and semifinal matches, Chanpheng met 1995 World Championship semifinalist and 1995 U.S. National Champion Mark Justice in the final round of this grueling three-day event. Chanpheng defeated Justice 3-0 to win the 1996 Magic World Championships, a trophy, a one-of-a-kind 1996 World Champion Magic card, and

\$26,000 in cash.

Now Chanpheng finds himself immortalized in the world’s largest-selling copyrighted book. Surprised to hear of his record, Chanpheng stated, “I really didn’t expect anything like this. Even during the Worlds tournament my highest anticipation was to finish in the Top 32. I think this kind of thing is possible for anyone.” Now 20, Chanpheng is an undergraduate

at Queensland University of Technology, where he studies biotechnology.

Envisioned by Englishman Sir Hugh Beaver, *The Guinness Book of World Records* was originally compiled by editors and statisticians Norris and Ross McWhirte as a reference guide for worldwide record achievements. *The Guinness Book of World Records* is published annually and available in 77 different countries and 38 languages.

## Andon Releases 1998 Convention Calendar

Andon Unlimited, founded by Gary E. Smith and

acquired by Wizards of the Coast in 1995, currently manages seven adventure gaming conventions across the country, including two of the largest shows in the nation (Gen Con Game Fair and Origins International Game Expo & Fair), as well as the adventure gaming industry's only trade show—the GAMA (Game Manufacturers Association) Trade Show.

Andon held their first convention, AndCon, in 1990 on the Kent State University campus. Started by dedicated enthusiasts of adventure gaming, AndCon doubled in size every year for the first three


years to a total attendance of over 1,000.

In 1993, GAMA approached Andon to take over management of Origins after the show's worst year. Under the leadership of Gary E. Smith, attendance doubled the next year. Since Andon has managed Origins, the show has increased over 300 percent in attendance.

Listed at right are dates and locations for Andon's 1998 conventions. For exhibitor, advertiser, or attendee information on these shows, contact Andon Unlimited, Inc. at (614) 856-3976 (ext. 204).

## Calendar

- **Winter Fantasy**  
February 26–March 1  
Rosemont, Illinois
- **GAMA Trade Show**  
April 2–5  
Miami, Florida
- **East Coast Game Faire**  
May 8–10  
East Rutherford, New Jersey
- **3-Rivers Game Fest**  
May 22–25  
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
- **Origins '98**  
July 2–5  
Columbus, Ohio
- **Gen Con '98**  
August 6–9  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin
- **AndCon '98**  
October 1998  
Toledo, Ohio



# The Rumor Mill

From the Trenches of  
Wizards of the Coast Customer Service

**Y**o. We are the Wizards of the Coast Customer Service crew—let you can call us Steve. You talk to us when you call, send mail, or write one of those old-fashioned paper letters. Wanting to branch out, we recently combed Hunter Color Wall Magazine and Brownie Kit '98 to see what we could use our way Q & A column. Here we'll answer common questions we hear our friends ask, rumors you may have heard (especially in these "hoodlum" magazines). So here we are, that used to be.

**Q:** Are you guys being technical anymore for AD&D and Legend of the Five Rings?

**A:** You guys at Wizards of the Coast Customer Service is providing technical support for TSR products. This is 1998, since Richard Garfield has us in his Magic dungeons so long we haven't had much time to play TSR games—let alone writing up a 11-page 1998 Handbook. In the meantime, if we can't find the answer to our books, we ask the TSR staff. They seem to have been playing their games a lot longer.

The King Publishing Group has their own Customer Service staff and you can write them directly just as you always did in <TSR@KING.COM>, but you should now call (425) 244-2197.

**Q:** Hey, you guys involve Spellfire? What's up with that?

**A:** A lot of you noticed Spellfire isn't in the 1998 product catalog. Although this game has a tremendously loyal following, its sales have never been spectacular. While Wizards of the Coast and TSR would love to ignore the bottom line and publish all of our games forever, the accounting staff breathes in some numbers and spreadsheets and gosh, informed us that, financially, this didn't make sense. We will continue to support Spellfire, however. Look for the upcoming Spellfire Reference Guide, Volume IV created by you, the fans.

If of course, the best way to show your support for Spellfire is to teach your friends how to play. The more fans a game has, the more it sells, which makes it easier to overcome the circumstances we can afford to ignore. Spellfire is a freebie, so check out the "Help Save Spellfire" section at [www.wizards.com](http://www.wizards.com).  
<[www.wizards.com](http://www.wizards.com)>

**Q:** What you said "catalog." Can I get one?

**A:** Sure, Wizards of the Coast TSR and Five Rings Publishing Group has released the 1998 product catalog. You can get a copy by sending a card and money order for \$12.95 (US) to cover postage and handling with your name and address to:

1998 Wizards of the Coast Catalog  
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Remember, you cannot order from this catalog. We do not provide a mail-order service, though we might be able to put you in contact with someone who does. Just give us a call. Be sure to ask for Steve.

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# Insider Trading



by Mark Rosewater

## Top 10 Match-Up

Below are the top ten oddest names for *Stronghold* playtest cards. See if you can match them with the final card names.

### PLAYTEST CARDS

- 10) Fortress of Solitude
- 9) Not Me
- 8) Radar Jammer
- 7) Phantom Commando
- 6) Force Whammo
- 5) No Pain, No Gain
- 4) Population Boom
- 3) Scared Cat
- 2) Buddy System
- 1) Cattle Prod

### STRONGHOLD CARDS

- a) Bullwhip
- b) Dream Prowler
- c) Duct Crawler
- d) Grave Pact
- e) Heat of Battle
- f) Mana Leak
- g) Mogg Flunkies
- h) Mogg Infestation
- i) Pursuit of Knowledge
- j) Rebound

#### ANSWERS

## Building the Stronghold

Here's a look at how a few cards from *Stronghold* mutated during development.

### PLAYTEST VERSION

**Hungry Vampire** 3BB

Summon Vampire

0/0

Flying

Put three +1/+1 counters on Hungry Vampire when it is put into play. During upkeep, sacrifice a creature to put a +1/+1 counter on Hungry Vampire. If no creature is sacrificed, Hungry Vampire loses a +1/+1 counter. Only one creature may be sacrificed each upkeep.

### RELEASED VERSION ▼



While doing development on *Mirage's* Ravenous Vampire, I came up with this vampire variant, but it was put on hold in the "future release" bin. When we began looking for cards to represent members of the *Weatherlight* crew, this one seemed perfect for Crovax...except that Crovax's metamorphosis into a vampire didn't happen until *Stronghold*. So we delayed the card again and concentrated on beefing up his presence (it's no fun having wimpy heroes), dropping his casting cost by one colorless mana, adding another +1/+1 counter, and making his flying ability activated.

### PLAYTEST VERSION

**Genesis** 2UU

Sorcery

Return each creature to its owner's hand.



### RELEASED VERSION ▲

The card was created as a Wrath of God-like effect for blue. In development, we decided that it would be much more beneficial as an instant, so blue players could keep mana available for counter-magic and then use this card during their opponents' discard phases. We upped the cost of the card to keep it balanced.

▼ Check out Crovax's latest transformation by Ron Spencer on this month's cover of *The Duelist*.



### PLAYTEST VERSION

**Mask of the Mimic** UU

Enchant Creature

When you play Mask of the Mimic, choose target creature other than enchanted creature.

Enchanted creature has all characteristics of the targeted creature instead of its own characteristics.

If the targeted creature leaves play, return Mask of the Mimic to owner's hand.

### RELEASED VERSION ▼



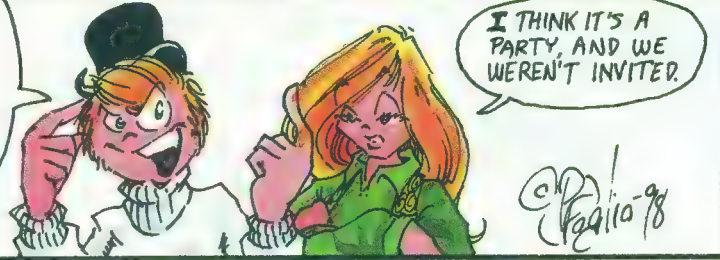
As we got further into development, we relearned an age-old Magic lesson: clones cause problems. Since the idea of this card was to turn a creature into a copy of a creature in play, we made it into an instant that sacrifices a creature and replaces it with a creature from your library that is identical to one already in play.

# WHAT'S NEW?

It's My Party...

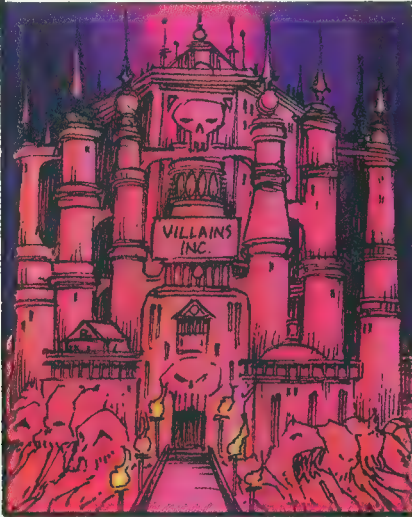
by Phil Foglio

So. I get a call from The Duelist. "They want you to do something about Stronghold." What's the story line, I ask. "Damfino," they reply, "All they gave us was the name." So I call some of The Designers for information. No one calls me back. Well, if that's the way they want it, fine. Here's what I think Stronghold might be about.



CP Foglio '98

There's this place called Stronghold. It's run by The Bad Guys. I'm guessing this because The Good Guys have a boat, and A Story needs Conflict.



Our Heroes either have to get past this place or get into it. Since this boat of theirs flies, getting past it would seem to be too easy, even for Gerrard (Conflict, remember?), so they probably have to get inside.



Why bother? Treasure? Too frivolous. Get a Magic Item? This is not D & D. Probably to rescue someone. This gives you tension! Pathos! Show the Good Guys Dogooding. Who's the McGuffin? A child they met in town? A member of the crew who's been captured? One of their parents or a heretofore unrevealed love interest? Who cares? Charge!



Now, do they sneak in or boldly attack? Think. The place is called 'Stronghold' not 'Drive-Thru.' I'm guessing they sneak in, with lots of opportunities for funny disguises and/or cool ninja-type stuff. This would also add tension up until they're discovered and have to fight their way out. This gives you action!



Naturally there's got to be a Badass Villain in residence, or else it would be too easy, and Harrison Ford does not make movies about going to the Post Office unless there's 100 disgruntled mail carriers with Uzis marching in behind him. So—Badass Villain here.



And Finally, The Big Fight! Mano-a-Mano! Victory or Death! A minor character might die, but the Big Guns maintain their Marketing Possibilities (if one captive is a never-before-seen love interest, he or she is toast). But somebody is rescued, and there's a Dramatic Escape! Valuable Moral and Philosophical Insights are gained (just kidding)! Phil gets his phone calls returned!



END



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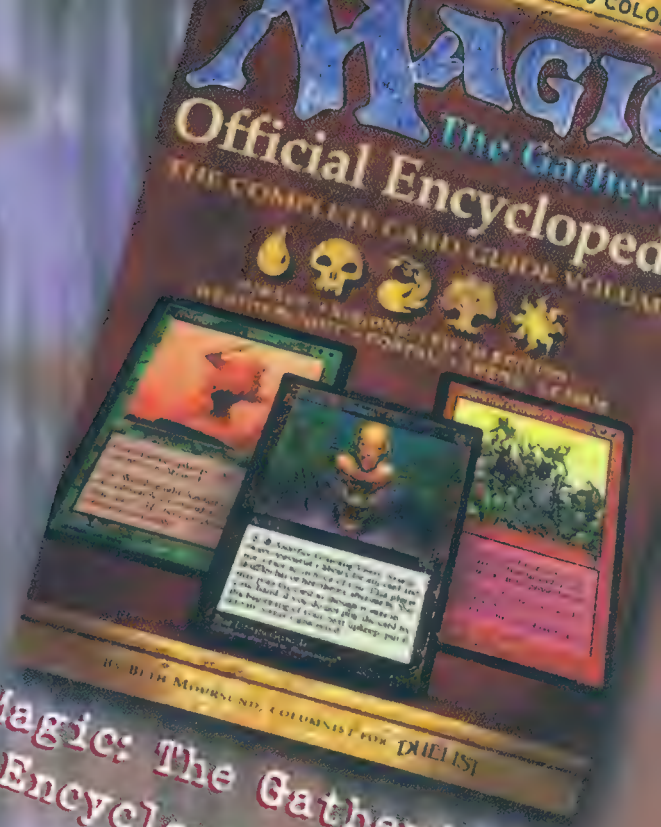
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The Complete Card Guide Volume 2 by Duelist columnist, Beth Moursund, picks up where the Complete Card Guide left off, covering every new card released since the middle of 1996, including cards from Mirage, Visions, Weatherlight, Portal, and Arena League. This 144 page, 8 1/2" x 11" paperback manual includes reproductions of over 1,300 cards with information crucial for collectors: the rarity of the card in each set in which it appears, the sets in which different versions of the card appear, the card's current errata, and notes on the card's general function.

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# MAGIC COMPENDIUM

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"The year is a horror!"



## Duelist Picks & Tricks

**A**ttention! You are now entering the stronghold. All planeswalkers are required to cover in the presence of our lord, Volrath, and present their identification papers to the Mogg guard in customs area W. Thank you. You've followed our hearty adventurers into the heart of Volrath's demesne. You need the best Magic Rath has to offer if you're going to survive. To aid you in your travels outside Dominaria, here are some *Stronghold* and *Tempest* combos to astound the locals. And remember, the white zone is for loading and unloading only.

### Bottomless Pit and Megrim

These two black *Stronghold* enchantments pack a powerful one-two punch that should quickly make any Rath resident run in terror. Here's how to set up this horror. Tap  $\{1\}$  and cast *Bottomless Pit*. While in play, *Bottomless Pit* forces each player to discard a random card during his or her upkeep. Now, for another  $\{2\}$  cast *Megrim*, which deals 2 damage to any opponent who discards a card. Then sit back and watch your opponent's hand and life shrink every upkeep. Just be careful: *Bottomless Pit* doesn't suck all of your best cards down into the abyss.

### Shifting Wall and Rolling Stones

Possibly one of the most efficient creatures in the game,



*Stronghold's* *Shifting Wall* provides a one-to-one ratio of casting cost to power and toughness—*Shifting Wall* has a casting cost of  $\{X\}$ , which provides this 0/0 artifact

creature with 'X' +1/+1 counters when it comes into play. Unfortunately, like most walls, *Shifting Wall* can't attack. Enter *Rolling Stones*. This white *Stronghold* enchantment gives walls their walking—or perhaps rolling—papers. For  $\{1\}$ , *Rolling Stones* permits all walls to attack as though they were not walls. So, pump up that *Shifting Wall* and get ready to rock and roll.

### Invasion Plans and Lowland Basilisk

Here's a Rath twist to that old favorite—

the *Lured Basilisk*. *Invasion Plans* is a red *Stronghold* enchantment that forces all available creatures to block an incoming attack. The catch is that the attacker gets to choose how each creature blocks (assuming all blocks are



legal). To complete this combo, *Stronghold* also offers a Basilisk to use with your *Invasion Plans*. *Lowland Basilisk* is a cheaper, leaner cousin to *Fifth Edition's* *Thicket Basilisk*. For only  $\{2\}$  you get a 1/3 Basilisk that will destroy any creature it damages in combat. So, with *Invasion Plans* in play, attack with your green swarm and have all your opponent's creatures block the Basilisk. Not only will you get

a horde of damage through, but you get to choose which of your opponent's creatures will die. To add insult to injury, cast Giant Growth on the Basilisk and destroy three more creatures for only — talk about mana efficient. And you thought green wasn't good at creature removal.

### Scapegoat and Winds of Rath

The downside of casting global destruction cards like *Tempest's Winds of Rath* or its cousin *Wrath*



of God is that you lose all your creatures at the same time your opponent loses his or her creatures. What you need is a scapegoat, and now you have one. *Scapegoat* from *Stronghold* is a white instant that lets you sacrifice one creature to return any number of your creatures back to your hand. So, cast that *Winds of Rath*, and then respond to it by casting *Scapegoat*. Sacrifice one creature you can afford to lose to pull the rest back to safety. On your next turn, you can begin to rebuild your forces while your opponent mourns.

### Crovax the Cursed and Spirit Mirror

Crovax has been cursed to be a vampire, which is good



news for players who favor black. For 2♣♣ this legendary vampire gets four +1/+1 counters and the potential for flight. The kicker is that if you sacrifice a creature to Crovax during upkeep, he gets stronger. The drawback is that you must feed Crovax during upkeep or he gets weaker. To keep Crovax happy and strong we suggest *Spirit Mirror*. This white *Tempest* enchantment creates a Reflection token (a 2/2 white creature) during upkeep every turn there are

no Reflection tokens in play. So with *Spirit Mirror* in play, the insatiable Crovax will have an unending supply of entrées.

### Maze of Shadows and Dauthi Trapper

When *Tempest* introduced creatures with shadow, Magic designers also gave players *Maze of Shadows* to help stop these deadly creatures. As a land, *Maze of Shadows* can be added to any deck and can be tapped to untap an attacking creature with shadow, forcing it to neither deal nor receive damage in combat. This is great for creatures with shadow, but with *Maze of Ith* no longer in the Standard environment, what do you do about other big nasties? Now you can use *Dauthi Trapper*, a 1/1 *Stronghold* creature, to



### Conviction and Fugitive Druid

At 3/2, *Tempest's* *Fugitive Druid* is no Ernam Djinn (not that I've met Ernie, mind you), but when combined with *Stronghold's* *Conviction*, which provides an additional +1/+3, *Fugitive Druid* becomes a 4/5 powerhouse. Even better than that, when you cast creature enchantments (like *Conviction*) on *Fugitive Druid*, you get to draw a card, and for a cost of only ♣, you can return *Conviction* to your hand. So, at the end of your opponent's turn, tap a Plains and pull *Conviction* back to your hand. On your turn, cast it again and draw another card. Not only can you keep attacking for 4 damage, you get an extra card every turn. Look out Ernie, the *Fugitive* is on the loose.

"Picks & Tricks" was compiled by Will McDermott, with contributions from William Jockusch, Mark Rosewater, and Henry Stern.

# Extra Pulled

New!

An extra card pulled every turn through the end of the game. The first of this powerful card is a powerful card.

What Are You, Chicken?

Surgey

Each player adds all Magic cards in his or her personal collection to the ante. Winner takes all.

"In my store, we play for fun. You know what fun is? Winning!"  
 —"Hammer" Regnier

Illus. by Beeples

M

any people have asked why we've stopped printing ante cards. The official response is that there are gambling concerns when cards permanently change ownership. But the real reason has more to do with the temperament of the Magic R&D team. Gamblers at heart, the members of R&D started making the ante cards a little too competitive.

## The Lurker's Guide to the Stronghold

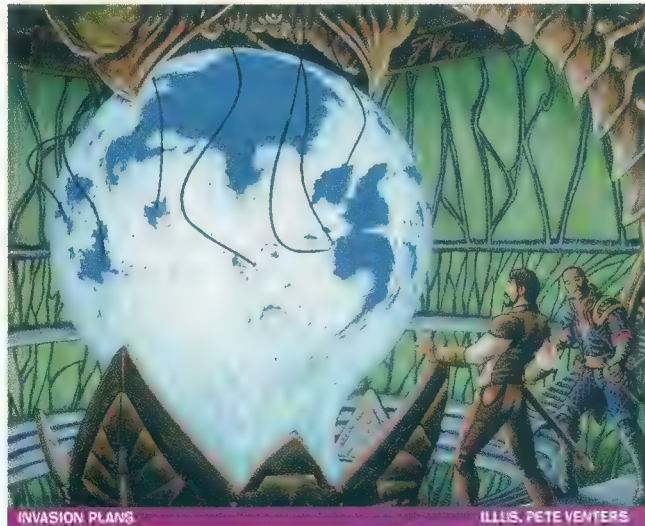
**W**hile the stronghold's monstrous, looming form strikes fear and respect into the teeming Moggs, *iz*, and other denizens that call it home, this cannot compare to the fear generated by the diminutive form of its ruler—Volrath. A mere six feet tall, Volrath appears slight compared to Greven *iz*-Vec, and from first impressions it's hard to imagine how this smaller figure could control his lieutenant at all, let alone dominate him. A closer look, however, shows the stride of a person with absolute belief in himself, a self confidence bordering on arrogance that can only be born within the security of power.

It is this same arrogance that makes Volrath play with his enemies. He allows the *Weatherlight* to dock close to the strategic heart of the stronghold, ensuring that only minimal and meticulously planned resistance will slow their ascent to his presence. Why would he allow his worst enemies into his base of operations? In this case, it's because he wants to personally snatch the final parts of the Legacy as he watches the life melt from Gerrard's eyes.

So let's follow on the heels of Gerrard and Co. and take a look at some of the more vital parts of the stronghold.

### The Map Room

This cavernous chamber is ringed with row upon row of benches, all facing toward a large brass-plated mechanism



at the center of the room. Within the mechanism sits a pool of white crystalline liquid veined with swirling blue. This liquid has been "taught" to display a map of Dominaria. When activated, it blossoms up into a sphere and areas of it condense into a deep blue to display land masses against the sphere's silvery white surface. The map is surprisingly detailed, and can be further enhanced, zooming in and flattening to a disc to show detailed landscapes. It is, in fact, capable of showing individual buildings and troop movements as they occur.

The ceiling mechanism houses several black coils made of the same mimetic metal as Greven's spine. These coils are able to curl down around the globe, simulating Mercator lines and measurements, as well as writing and anything else needed to explain the evincar's plans to gathered generals. While the generals would be seated in the four rows closest to the map, there is an outer ring

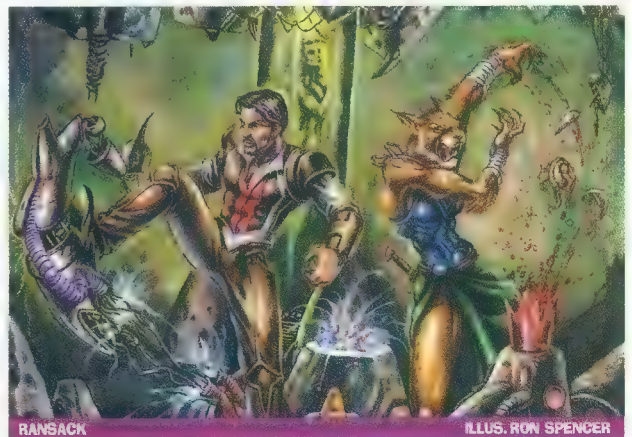
distinctly set apart for the footsoldiers to gather if a larger assembly is required. It is worth noting that the room appears to be almost unused and is practically spotless, which suggests that the less-than-hygienic Moggs are not allowed entry to the chamber.

### The Prisons and the Labs

Volrath considers prisoners to be raw material for his loathsome tests, so it is no surprise that the prison block and the laboratories are housed in the same building. The prison is more than a collection of

mundane cells: Many of the chambers are fitted with devices to torture their occupants as well as restrain them. This torture is sometimes physical, but always psychological. Many of the cells are custom fitted, like Karn's, which has a flowstone floor programmed to tilt randomly and frequently. Filling the chamber with Moggs ensured that Karn would crush a living being with each tilt of the floor, forcing him to break his vow to never again harm a living being. Tahngarth's chamber struck him with a magical energy that slowly mutated his beloved form. While Tahngarth assumed he'd merely been disfigured for the sheer spite of it, in truth he was undergoing the first process to toughen him up before he went under a Thrull surgeon's knife and gained several enhancements (including a new spine) so that he could become a faithful first mate for Greven.

Volrath's personal operating theater is set up so that a large audience can watch the experiments, which are designed either to "improve" the subjects



or simply to mutilate them and measure their reactions for future reference. Ultimately, Volrath works towards the transcendence of the flesh, his own form being a perfect example of such engineering.

Chances are that Slivers, Spikes, and Licids were first created here (or at least adapted from a more benign species). The Moggs were first adapted from normal goblins within this chamber, and an enforced breeding program has brought the Mogg numbers up to the multitude that exists today.

### The Dream Halls

These halls are a relatively recent addition to the stronghold. Created by Volrath, they reflect his preoccupation with himself and his belief that his destiny lies beyond Rath—the Legacy artifacts the key to total victory.

The Dream Halls house physical manifestations of Volrath's unconscious: his memories of the past, his desires for the future. He often

goes to the halls to examine the events of his past (colored with his own perspective) and to run through events he wishes to play out in the future. This ability allows him to meticulously calculate encounters and events, so it is highly likely that he had rehearsed his encounter with Gerrard in exactly the same fashion as it actually occurred. It is anyone's guess if the real thing worked out as Volrath planned.

Physically, the halls are massive—you could easily park a couple of *Predator*-sized ships within—and filled with translucent mists that engulf a single wide walkway that stretches the length of the room. Above, running along the ceiling, is the monstrous, arachnid-shaped dream machine that maintains the images plucked from Volrath's mind. Dream catchers are lowered from this machine, and each holds and preserves a single memory.



DREAM HALLS

When lowered to the walkway, it is possible to step within a catcher and become totally immersed in the scene within. As Gerrard passes through the halls, he sees the dreams held in a few catchers that have been lowered to his level. Knowing Volrath, the dreams that Gerrard saw were only those that Volrath wished him to see.

### The Evincar's Quarters

Of all of Volrath's sanctums, there is one that Gerrard did not find: the evincar's personal quarters. Few have ever seen the interior of these chambers, and to many who work in the stronghold, the exact location of the rooms are a matter of speculation.

The quarters are not merely Volrath's sanctum; they house those machines that Volrath does not trust anyone else to operate. Among them

is the machine that can monitor activities almost anywhere on the plane, allowing Volrath to stretch his control over flowstone to every corner of Rath. Additionally

there exists a machine that monitors the planar barrier that enwraps Rath, which is the only device known that can accurately predict where new breaches into Dominaria will occur—a process that almost everyone else believes to be random.

Rumors persist that a small planar portal resides within the chambers for the evincar's personal use. Whether it can lead to multiple planes, or just one, is pure speculation.

### Moving On

The stronghold was brought to you by many creative minds working feverishly to develop and redefine the clichéd notion of "the villain's fortress." We hope you enjoyed your visit. Be thankful, you get to leave....

*Pete Venters is currently locked away painting more cards. Unfortunately the light in his dungeon cell is provided by a luminescent Licid with a bad attitude and even worse toilet training.*

# Dominian FAQ

<continuity@wizards.com>

If you have any questions about us (and or recent history in Dominia) (no rules questions, please), email them to <continuity@wizards.com>. Though we cannot respond to each question individually, we will post a selection of the most common questions (and the occasional oddity) to answer on these pages.

Why do you keep changing the quote on the Llanowar Elväs card? In early editions, the quote read "Whenever the Llanowar Elväs gather the fruit of their forest, they leave one plant of each type untouched, considering that nature's portion." In *Fourth Edition* it was "Hardened by their life in the haunted Llanowar Forest, these fierce beings are outcasts among elvönkind." By the time *Fifth Edition* came out, it was "one bone broken for every twig snapped underfoot."

Both the original text and the *Fifth Edition* text are accurate—they are simply facets of the Llanowar. The elves treat nature with reverence and their home is a sanctuary from humans who regularly defile the land with their constructions. Subsequently they treat trespassers very harshly—to them a tree is more important than a human.

For *Fourth Edition*, the tree-hugging text from early editions just didn't seem to fit with the meaner-than-average-looking elf, but when all flavor text was reviewed for *Fifth Edition*, we realized the newer text was simply misleading; both of these statements are opinions from the skewed viewpoint of an ignorant trespasser.—P.V.

# Deck Clinic

by Henry Stern and Mike Elliott

Vada Bass of Elmhurst, Illinois sent in the following Auratog-Femeref Enchantress deck for a general tune-up. Vada claims the deck is “missing some power,” even with its potent card-drawing capabilities. Although this is a clinic and not an auto shop, Doctors Stern and Elliott (a new member of the clinic staff) took a look “under the hood” of Vada’s deck and performed a power bypass.

If you’d like us to consider your deck for “Deck Clinic,” just send a list of what’s in your deck along with a brief description of its ailment to: Deck Clinic, c/o The Duelist, P.O. Box 707, Renton, WA 98057, or to <duelist@wizards.com>.

## HENRY

The poor, maligned Auratog... I remember during *Tempest* development, one designer (who shall remain nameless) referred to it as the “Pathetotog.” This name was quickly expunged, however, when a member of the Development team built an Auratog deck that did pretty well in playtest. The nameless R&D member was suitably impressed.

This month’s deck is a decent attempt to make an Auratog deck. I liked many of the creatures in the original deck; its problem was in the choice of enchantments. For the most part, the original deck relied on local creature enchantments to feed the Auratogs and thus trigger the card-drawing ability of Femeref Enchantresses. The problem with this strategy is an issue that plagues all local enchantments—they simply are not efficient cards.

Local enchantments tend to be unplayable in competitive constructed decks for two reasons. First, local enchantments

depend on having a creature in play on which to put them. If your initial draw contains only enchantments you’re in a lot of trouble. Later in the game, if your opponent wipes out your creature base (say, with a Wrath of God), you may draw enchantments and have no creatures on which to play them.

Second, and more importantly, even when you do find a creature to enchant, that enchantment simply makes the creature more satisfying for your opponent to destroy.

One Terror will take out two cards instead of one, putting you in a position of card disadvantage, which is simply unacceptable. Card disadvantage is the main reason local enchantments are rarely seen in tournament decks.

The key to improving this deck, while staying within the Auratog-Enchantress theme, is to use quality global enchantments. Aura of Silence is an easy choice. This versatile spell serves double duty. Aura makes it much more difficult for your opponent to cast artifacts and enchantments. Then, if he or she does manage to cast an artifact or enchantment, you can sacrifice Aura of Silence to remove it. It’s like a Disenchant that sits around daring your opponent to cast something useful. Another good *Weatherlight* global enchantment is Angelic Renewal, since it can be used to save your best creatures. Field of Souls is a very powerful *Tempest* card, but with its higher casting cost there is only room for one in the deck. Pacifism and Spirit Link may not be the best creature-control spells in the game, but since they are

enchantments, both are well worth playing here.

In green, I was surprised the original deck did not have Armor of Thorns, as this is one of the few local enchantments worth playing. Remember, even if you cast it as an instant, Armor of Thorns still counts as an enchantment for the purposes of both the Auratog and the Enchantress. I also added Preferred Selection to help you get through land clumps quickly. I came close to putting one Recycle in the deck, but it doesn’t combine well with Preferred Selection. However, if you’re feeling a bit nutty...

In addition to changing the enchantment base, I changed a few of the creatures. Since the new deck doesn’t use many local enchantments, Fugitive Druid no longer makes much sense. Also, there are better offensive threats than Soltari Foot Soldier and Rootwalla. The new creatures are all good offensive-threat cards by themselves. Soltari Monk and Soltari Priest are both good in general and great if your opponent is playing either red or black. Elvish Archers can block the various Black Knight creature types and makes a good target for Armor of Thorns. Jolrael’s Centaur is the best “untargetable” creature in the game, and Maro is a huge threat card.

Finally, to round out the deck a little, I added one Armageddon and one Hurricane. These spells are so good it’s almost impossible not to play with them in a green/white deck. Just having the threat of casting an Armageddon or Hurricane makes adding one of each to your deck well worth it.

No sideboard was provided with the original deck, but if I were to build one, I would

## VADA'S DECK

### GREEN (29)

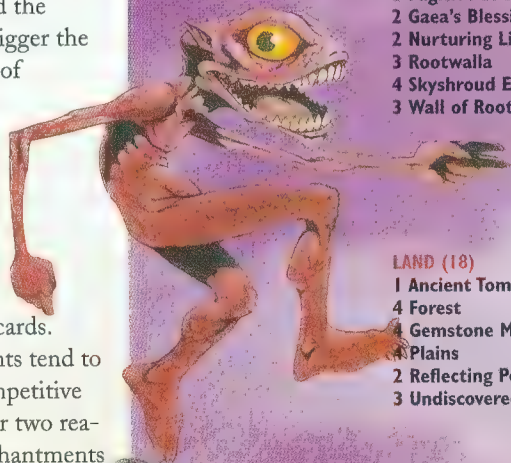
- 3 Briar Shield
- 3 Eladamri's Vineyard
- 3 Femeref Enchantress
- 3 Frog Tongue
- 3 Fugitive Druid
- 2 Gaea's Blessing
- 2 Nurturing Lcid
- 3 Rootwalla
- 4 Skyshroud Elf
- 3 Wall of Roots

### WHITE (13)

- 3 Auratog
- 3 Disenchant
- 3 Flickering Ward
- 4 Soltari Foot Soldier

### LAND (18)

- 1 Ancient Tomb
- 4 Forest
- 1 Gemstone Mine
- 4 Plains
- 2 Reflecting Pool
- 3 Undiscovered Paradise





look for enchantment-based color hosers like Light of Day or the various Circles of Protection.

## MIKE

One big problem with creature enchantments is you leave yourself open to card disadvantage situations. Nothing is more annoying than a creature getting destroyed as you cast an enchantment on it, or a creature with two enchantments on it being taken out by a Terror (a three-for-one card loss). To compensate for this, you need some way to recover from card losses if you play a deck heavy with enchantments.

Enter Femeref Enchantress, which allows you to draw cards to replace enchantments that go to the graveyard from play. Still, it's a tough world out there, and bad things can happen. So you don't want to go "hog wild" with enchantments, especially creature enchantments. Your Femeref Enchantress can get bolted, fall prey to a Nekrataal, or sit undrawn in your deck, so your cards must stand on their own. You need contingency plans for games in which you don't draw the Enchantress or it gets destroyed.

Auratog is the key contingency card in this deck. It provides an additional use for several cards that would otherwise be somewhat marginal (like Pacifism and Spirit Link), and works well with or without the Enchantress. A Spirit Link on an Auratog provides a double threat. If your opponent uses a creature to block the Auratog's attack, you can sacrifice Spirit Link to give the Auratog a +2/+2 boost to help it survive combat and destroy the blocker. If your opponent does not block, you get a 2-point life swing every turn.

Pacifism, another card marginally useful in most cases, actually has high play value in this deck. Use it to neutralize an opponent's creature. If Pacifism gets destroyed, you hope to replace it with another card via Femeref Enchantress. In addition, Pacifism can help finish an opponent when used with Auratog. Cast Pacifism on a potential blocker then attack with the Auratog. The defending creature can't block. After blocking is declared, you can sacrifice Pacifism to deal that fatal extra 2 damage.

To fit in with the general Auratog/Enchantress theme of the deck, I replaced Disenchant with Aura of Silence. Sure, it costs one more mana, but it is hugely annoying for most opponents, and it may let you draw a card when it leaves play or provide food for your hungry Auratog. I also added Earthcraft, which allows a little more mana generation and can also be food for your Auratog.

In addition to the enchantment combos, I added a couple more threat cards. Although Fugitive Druid's ability can be nice, it just doesn't have the base stats to justify its place in the deck. Crazy Armodon and Maro provide some beef for a deck that was a little deficient on big guys (plus, Crazy Armodon can be a nice finisher). Lhurgoyf and Nature's Resurgence provide a way to recover from catastrophic effects such as a Nevinyrral's Disk or Perish, and Overrun can be a game winner in the right situation.

The mana configuration of the original deck was somewhat anti-theme. The deck had Eladamri's Vineyard, but few ways to use the mana the Vineyard provided each turn, so it could easily burn you as often as it helped. Plus, the two green mana Vineyard

# THE DOCTORS ARE IN



## HENRY'S DECK

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2 Armor of Thorns</li> <li>2 Elvish Archers</li> <li>3 Femeref Enchantress</li> <li>1 Hurricane</li> <li>3 Jolrael's Centaur</li> <li>2 Maro</li> <li>2 Preferred Selection</li> <li>1 Uktabi Orangutan</li> <li>3 Wall of Roots</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2 Disenchant</li> <li>1 Field of Souls</li> <li>2 Pacifism</li> <li>2 Soltari Monk</li> <li>2 Soltari Priest</li> <li>1 Spirit Link</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2 Angelic Renewal</li> <li>1 Armageddon</li> <li>3 Aura of Silence</li> <li>2 Auratog</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4 Brushland</li> <li>6 Forest</li> <li>7 Plains</li> <li>2 Quicksand</li> <li>2 Reflecting Pool</li> <li>2 Undiscovered Paradise</li> </ul>

## MIKE'S DECK

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3 Birds of Paradise</li> <li>3 Briar Shield</li> <li>1 Crazy Armodon</li> <li>1 Earthcraft</li> <li>3 Femeref Enchantress</li> <li>2 Lhurgoyf</li> <li>4 Llanowar Elves</li> <li>1 Maro</li> <li>1 Nature's Resurgence</li> <li>1 Overrun</li> <li>2 Quirion Ranger</li> <li>1 Uktabi Orangutan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5 Forest</li> <li>4 Gemstone Mine</li> <li>3 Plains</li> <li>4 Reflecting Pool</li> <li>3 Undiscovered Paradise</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2 Armageddon</li> <li>2 Aura of Silence</li> <li>4 Auratog</li> <li>3 Flickering Ward</li> <li>3 Pacifism</li> <li>2 Spirit Link</li> <li>1 Wrath of God</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Angelic Renewal</li> <li>1 Aura of Silence</li> <li>2 Choke</li> <li>2 City of Solitude</li> <li>2 Disenchant</li> <li>2 Hurricane</li> <li>1 Phyrexian Furnace</li> <li>2 Uktabi Orangutan</li> <li>2 Whirling Dervish</li> </ul>

gives your opponent isn't always a drawback, since he or she may be able to cast large creatures and artifacts much earlier.

When only playing two colors, Skyshroud Elf is just not worth the extra mana to cast. I replaced it with Birds of Paradise. The same problem is true for Wall of Roots. Llanowar Elves just comes out faster. Granted, Wall of Roots has defensive potential against some decks, but the higher cost makes the card less interesting in this deck. Since the deck has very few high-cost spells, you can get away with a

somewhat lower amount of mana. In fact, I've taken advantage of the low mana configuration to play mana-denial cards that impact opponents, such as Armageddon.

The original deck didn't have a sideboard. The sideboard I added contains cards to deal with blue control decks, other enchantment-heavy decks, and black decks. I also added a few other cards like Phyrexian Furnace and Angelic Renewal to deal with Living Death decks, which are gaining popularity.

As licensed deck doctors, Henry and Mike are often invited to test new "productivity" software programs, such as **Starcraft**.



# Magic Rulings and Errata

by Beth  
"BethMo"  
Moursund



Beth Moursund has graciously accepted the position of Magic rules coordinator at Wizards of the Coast. As the only person on Earth who knows the rules as well as Tom Wylie, BethMo is a natural choice to replace Tom as the "keeper of the rules." And don't worry about Tom. He's being kept very busy in Wizards' R&D dungeon.

## GENERAL RULES

- 1) **Page 35 of the Fifth Edition rulebook states that all continuous abilities are applied in the order they came into play. This isn't completely correct. As a general guideline, if an effect depends on some characteristic, you must first evaluate anything that might change that characteristic, unless doing so forms a loop. When effects of any kind conflict or when dependencies form a loop, the order in which continuous abilities were played decides the order in which their effect(s) are applied.**

For example, Kormus Bell turns all swamps into creatures, even lands that become swamps after it's played. Crusade gives +1/+1 to all white creatures, even those that become white or creatures after Crusade is played. Similarly, Humility turns all creatures into 1/1 creatures with no special abilities, even those that become creatures after Humility is played. (Other power- and toughness-altering abilities played after Humility still apply as usual.)

- 2) **To determine a creature's current power and toughness:**  
a) **Start with its base power and toughness. This is usually printed in the bottom right corner of the card, but can also be set by the effect that created the creature (see errata 1 below).**

b) **Apply pluses and minuses from all counters.**

c) **Apply all other effects.**

For example, a Grizzly Bear with a +1/+1 counter that's been targeted with Blood Lust is 7/1, not 7/2. Note that effects that set a creature's power and toughness to specific values are applied after

counters; the counters aren't applied again after other modifying effects resolve. For example, Unstable Mutation can't destroy a creature while Humility is in play, because Humility always sets the creature's toughness to 1 after the Unstable Mutation's counters are applied.

- 3) **To determine a spell or ability's total cost:**

a) **If it's a spell, start with its casting cost. If it's an activated ability, start with its base activation cost.**

b) **Apply all cost increases. These include extra costs called for in the spell or ability's text box (such as buyback costs) as well as increases imposed by other effects (Gloom, Kaervek's Torch, etc.).**

c) **Apply all cost reductions. These include effects of cards such as Helm of Awakening, the Medallions, and Power Artifact. Note: This reverses some old rulings that prevented effects from reducing certain costs.**

**Abilities that enable you to play a spell or ability without paying its casting cost or activation cost do not eliminate additional costs—those must still be paid.**

For example, playing Counterspell on Kaervek's Torch while you have a Sapphire Medallion in play costs a total of 1 ♦ ♦ ♦; playing a White Knight with both Aluren and Gloom in play costs 3. (Remember, though, abilities enabling you to put a permanent into play instead of playing it bypass all costs required to play it.)

- 4) **There is no longer a "between turns" step.**

This ruling affects Time Vault. See the errata on Time Vault below.

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- 5) Abilities that trigger when a source assigns damage will re-trigger if that damage is redirected, even if the source itself wasn't responsible for the redirection.

For example, if Kookus is blocked by a 2/2 Zhalfirin Crusader, Justice will deal 3 damage after the initial damage assignment. If the Crusader's ability isn't used, 1 damage will "trample over," causing Justice to deal 1 additional damage. If Crusader uses its ability and redirects all 3 damage, Justice will deal 3 more damage.

- 6) When an ability is played, it creates a "pseudo-spell." The pseudo-spell's characteristics, which are the same as the characteristics of its source, are set when the ability is played, as are its controller and (if its source is an enchantment) what it's enchanting. The pseudo-spell is completely independent of its source and is unaffected by later changes to it.

A permanent's "leaves play" triggered abilities create pseudo-spells with characteristics based on the permanent just before it left play. A permanent's "comes into play" triggered abilities create pseudo-spells with characteristics based on the card or token-creating ability and the associated permanent type. If a card refers to itself by name, its "identity" is also recorded.

Pseudo-spells resolve just like spells. A pseudo-spell checks the current characteristics of a permanent the first time during resolution it needs to know anything about that permanent. Triggered abilities check the current game state to decide which targets are legal; those targets are then re-checked at resolution.

For example, Kjeldoran Outpost's comes-into-play ability creates a "sacrifice a plains or sacrifice the card that created this effect" pseudo-spell. A Blood Moon in play will change the Outpost's name, but does not exempt the Outpost from the effect of its comes-into-play ability. The main consequence of this change is that

when a permanent targets itself with an ability, it resolves exactly the same as when it targets another permanent.

- 7) If a continuous ability imposes a phase cost or phase ability on a particular permanent type, and a permanent stops being, and then returns to being, the affected type, that permanent doesn't gain a new, unpaid phase cost or ability. For example, during your upkeep you pay the cost imposed on a Frenetic Efreet by Pendrell Mists. If you then phase the Efreet out and cast Time and Tide to phase it back in, you don't need to pay the upkeep cost a second time. Moving a permanent out of play and back into play using Tawnos's Coffin or deanimating and reanimating an artifact follow the same rule.

However, cards like Safe Haven or Cold Storage that treat the creature as newly played when it returns require another upkeep payment. In addition, if you pay the upkeep imposed from a Leeching Lcid on one of your creatures (taking 1 damage) and the Lcid's controller hops it off the creature and then back on, the cost must be paid again because it is considered a new ability. Using Crown of the Ages to move Wanderlust to a new creature works the same way.

- 8) When you play a spell or ability that has more than one mode, you choose the mode first, then make any other choices required for that mode. You do not make any other choices required for the spell or ability's other modes. For example, if you cast Ebony Charm and choose the mode that removes a creature from a graveyard, you can't also target a Skulking Ghost in play. The one exception to this is Fatal Lore, because a spell's controller always makes his or her choices before any other player. Thus, you announce Fatal Lore's targets before your opponent decides whether to have the spell bury those targets or let you draw cards, and a Skulking Ghost targeted by

Fatal Lore will bury itself, even if your opponent chooses the “you draw three cards” mode.

## ERRATA

- 1) The word “base” should appear before power and toughness on all spells and abilities that can turn a permanent into a creature.

This means that (a) counters affect the creature, because they apply to the base value, and (b) reactivating the ability after a power- or toughness-altering effect no longer overwrites that effect.

For example, if an Assembly Worker blocks a creature with flanking, thereby getting -1/-1 until end of turn, playing the ability that makes the Mishra's Factory a 2/2 Assembly Worker won't reset its power and toughness.

- 2) Interdict's second sentence should read, “Activated abilities of that permanent cannot be played again this turn.”

This means a permanent affected by Interdict can still use nonactivated abilities such as flanking or protection's damage reduction aspect.

- 3) On the following cards, “target opponent” should read “an opponent”: **Cuombajj Witches, Cursed Scroll, Desperate Gambit, Echo Chamber, Fatal Lore, Forgotten Lore, Goblin Bomb, Intuition, Library of Lat-Nam, Nova Pentacle, Null Chamber, Phyrexian Grimoire, Phyrexian Portal, Preacher, Soul Echo, and Thran Tome.**

If you have more than one opponent, you must still choose one of them when playing the spell or ability, just as before. But because this choice is not targeted, effects that prevent spells or abilities from targeting a player will not interfere with it. These errata also remove the problem some cards (such as Cursed Scroll) had with the rule prohibiting a spell or ability from targeting something more than once.

- 4) **Time Vault's first activated ability should read “Skip your next turn: Untap Time Vault and put a time counter on it. Play this ability only if Time Vault is tapped and only once each turn.”**

## Specific Card Rulings

- 1) If you use an enchantment-moving ability (like Crown of the Ages) on a Lcid while it's an enchantment, the Lcid remains an enchantment—it doesn't change back to a creature and fall off.

This is because the Lcid's enchantment status is a temporary effect, not a permanent change. Moving enchantments resets only permanent changes, not temporary ones.

- 2) **When Minion of the Wastes is about to come into play by any means other than being cast, you must choose an amount of life (just as you would choose a form for Primal Clay or a target for Clone) and pay it right before the Minion comes into play.**

Minion of the Wastes is like Primal Clay because both read, “When you play [this card], [do something].” If either of these cards made it into play without the “when-you-play” choice being made, some of the permanent's characteristics would be undefined. These creatures differ from a creature like Krakilin, whose characteristics all have defined values.

- 3) **Reversal: Global effects that change one land type to another overwrite all of a card's current land types.**

For example, Conversion turns Badlands into a plains, not a Badlands that counts as both a swamp and a plains.

- 4) **The value of X in Endless Scream's text box is set when the spell is cast and does not revert to zero when the enchantment is in play, even though the mana in its casting cost becomes zero. Moving Endless Scream onto another creature doesn't change the value of X.**

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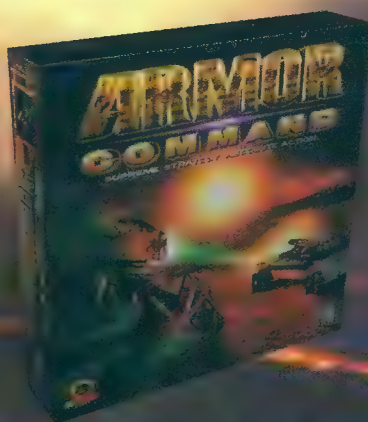
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## Single-Card Strategies

by JEFF FRANZMANN

### Fling

Canticle watched as the mechanical man extended its hand in greeting. Uncertain about its motives, Canticle stepped back and cast a furtive glance into the shadows. Without warning, the mechanical creature hurtled towards the necromancer in a shower of white-hot sparks.



**A** low-cost instant capable of dealing damage during your turn or during your opponent's turn is an invaluable tool. Even the cost of sacrificing a creature doesn't diminish Fling's usefulness. This card's effect depends on the sacrificed creature's power, so getting the most out of Fling requires careful timing and planning. For example, use Blood Lust to significantly raise a creature's power. If your opponent opts to let the beast through rather than sacrifice a valuable defender, cast Fling after the Lusted creature smacks your opponent to double the damage, or better still, eliminate a troublesome defender as well as damaging your opponent. Giant Growth and Howl from Beyond can work just as well in multicolored decks.

Fling is also exceedingly useful when combined with creatures captured from your opponent with Legacy's Allure, Rootwater Matriarch, or Binding Grasp. This provides fuel for the spell without costing you a card, and prevents your opponent from recovering that creature. Alternately, use Fling on creatures like Ashen Ghoul that can return from the grave, or in conjunction with spells such as Disturbed Burial that recycle dead creatures.

On defense, Fling breathes new life into old creatures. Ironroot Treefolk, once simply an adequate blocker, can now block a creature and then be sacrificed to Fling to kill another unblocked creature. Or block a big creature with a band and then Fling one member of the band at the damaged attacker to finish it off.

# Try It! Theme Weavers

"Theme Weavers" highlights decks that are light on strategy but heavy on theme. To submit a deck, send a card list and a short explanation to "Theme Weavers" c/o The Duelist, P.O. Box 707, Renton, WA 98057-0707, or to <duelist@wizards.com>. Include your name, address, and phone number for verification. Explanations may be edited for length or clarity.

## THE MAGES GUILD

The Mages Guild represents the personnel and items found in a typical arcane institution. The deck includes mages, wizards, sorcerers, and witches, with Reveka, Wizard Savant as the head wizard and Hakim, Loreweaver in the chair of school master. Several imps represent the requisite familiars. Six books and tomes represent the guild research library. The deck also includes wands, amulets, scrolls, and an assortment of spells to represent the magical items and spells the mages use. Wizards' School and Ivory Tower depict the guild itself.

—Jeffrey Laikam, Fortuna, California

### MAGES

Reveka, Wizard Savant  
Hakim, Loreweaver  
Apprentice Wizard  
Balduvian Conjurer  
Cuombajj Witches  
Daring Apprentice  
Krovikan Elementalist  
Krovikan Sorcerer  
Magus of the Unseen  
Musician  
Ovinomancer  
Prodigal Sorcerer  
Sage of Lat-Nam  
Shadow Guildmage  
Shaper Guildmage  
Soldevi Machinist  
Soldevi Sage  
Sorceress Queen  
Suq'Ata Firewalker  
Thalakos Dreamsover

Thrull Wizard  
Tolarian Entrancer  
Vodalian Illusionist  
Vodalian Mage  
Zuran Enchanter  
Zuran Spellcaster

### FAMILIARS

Bog Imp  
Ertai's Familiar  
Nettling Imp  
Norritt  
Pit Imp  
Teferi's Imp

### LIBRARY

Book of Rass  
Emmessi Tome  
Jayemdae Tome  
Jalum Tome  
Phyrexian Grimoire  
Mangara's Tome

### MAGIC ITEMS

Bubble Matrix  
Cursed Scroll  
Forethought Amulet  
Knowledge Vault  
Mind Stone  
Pentagram of the Ages  
Wand of Ith

### SPELLS

Amnesia  
Arcane Denial  
Braingeyser  
Control Magic  
Demonic Tutor  
Duplicity  
Ertai's Meddling  
Imprison  
Meddle  
Polymorph  
Season of the Witch

Spell Blast  
Steal Enchantment

### TOWER AND SCHOOL

Ivory Tower  
Wizards' School (4)

### GROUNDS

Island (10)  
Snow-Covered Island (5)  
Swamp (10)  
Snow-Covered Swamp (5)



## DIAL 'M' FOR MAGIC

This Alfred Hitchcock deck is black, blue, and red to represent the sinister aspects, violent murders, and mind games and subterfuge prevalent in his stories. To set the mood, I included Fear, Terror, Panic, Misinformation, Greed, Endless Scream, Booby Trap, and Tendrils of Despair (which has artwork reminiscent of *Psycho*). To represent some of Hitchcock's movies, the deck has: Tombstone Stairwell (*39 Steps*), Tormod's Crypt (*Family Plot*), Steal Artifact (*To Catch a Thief*), Blood Frenzy (*Frenzy*), Mystic Compass (*North by Northwest*), Braingeyser (*The Man Who Knew Too Much*), Vertigo (*Vertigo*), and Bay Falcon and Storm Crow (*The Birds*). In addition, Colossus of Sardia represents the Statue of Liberty from the climactic scene in *Saboteur*, Telethopter and the four Clay Statues represent the cropduster and the heads of Mount Rushmore from *North by Northwest*, and Silhouette pays homage to Hitchcock's famous profile.

—Steve Earth,  
Seattle, Washington

### SPELLS/ARTIFACTS

Black Vice  
Blood Frenzy  
Booby Trap  
Braingeyser  
Endless Scream  
Fear  
Gloom  
Greed  
Misinformation  
Mystic Compass  
Panic  
Propaganda  
Silhouette  
Spell Blast  
Steal Artifact

Tendrils of Despair  
Terror  
Time Bomb  
Tombstone Stairwell  
Tormod's Crypt  
Twitch  
Vanishing  
Vertigo

Lost Soul  
Orchis Spy (2)  
Pit Scorpion  
Starke of Rath  
Storm Crow  
Stromgald Spy (2)  
Suq'Ata Assassin (2)  
Telethopter

### CREATURES

Bay Falcon  
Black Carriage  
Clay Statue (4)  
Colossus of Sardia  
Dauthi Slayer (4)  
Ebon Praetor

### LANDS

Gemstone Mine (4)  
Island (6)  
Mountain (2)  
Sulfurous Springs (2)  
Swamp (10)  
Underground River (2)



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 Bronze Tablet  
 Channel  
 Chaos Orb  
 Contract from Below  
 Darkpact  
 Demonic Attorney  
 Divine Intervention  
 Falling Star  
 Jeweled Bird  
 Mind Twist  
 Rebirth  
 Shahrazad  
 Tempest Efreet  
 Timmerian Fiends

**CLASSIC (TYPE I)  
 RESTRICTED**

Ancestral Recall  
 Balance  
 Berserk  
 Black Lotus  
 Black Vise  
 Braingeyser  
 Demonic Tutor  
 Fastbond  
 Fork  
 Ivory Tower  
 Library of Alexandria  
 Maze of Ith  
 Mirror Universe  
 Mox Emerald  
 Mox Jet  
 Mox Pearl  
 Mox Ruby  
 Mox Sapphire  
 Recall  
 Regrowth  
 Sol Ring  
 Strip Mine  
 Time Walk  
 Timetwister  
 Underworld Dreams  
 Wheel of Fortune

**CLASSIC-RESTRICTED  
 (TYPE 1.5) BANNED**

*Any ante card contained in any newly released card set*

Amulet of Quoz  
 Ancestral Recall  
 Balance  
 Berserk  
 Black Lotus  
 Black Vise  
 Braingeyser  
 Bronze Tablet  
 Candelabra of Tawnos  
 Channel  
 Chaos Orb  
 Contract from Below  
 Copy Artifact  
 Darkpact  
 Demonic Attorney  
 Demonic Tutor  
 Divine Intervention  
 Falling Star  
 Fastbond

Feldon's Cane  
 Fork  
 Ivory Tower  
 Jeweled Bird  
 Library of Alexandria  
 Maze of Ith  
 Mind Twist  
 Mirror Universe  
 Mishra's Workshop  
 Mox Emerald  
 Mox Jet  
 Mox Pearl  
 Mox Ruby  
 Mox Sapphire  
 Rebirth  
 Recall  
 Regrowth  
 Shahrazad  
 Sol Ring  
 Strip Mine  
 Tempest Efreet  
 Time Walk  
 Timetwister  
 Timmerian Fiends  
 Underworld Dreams  
 Wheel of Fortune  
 Zuran Orb

**EXTENDED  
 BANNED**

*Any cards from the following limited-edition expansion and basic sets are banned unless they are reprinted in a legal set, limited or otherwise:*

Alpha  
 Beta  
 Arabian Nights  
 Antiquities  
 Legends  
 Unlimited

*The following individual cards are also banned in Extended format:*

Balance  
 Black Vise  
 Braingeyser  
 Channel  
 Demonic Tutor  
 Fastbond  
 Hypnotic Specter  
 Ivory Tower  
 Kird Ape  
 Mana Crypt  
 Maze of Ith  
 Mind Twist  
 Regrowth  
 Serendib Efreet  
 Sol Ring  
 Strip Mine  
 Wheel of Fortune  
 Zuran Orb

**STANDARD (TYPE II)  
 BANNED**

*Any ante card contained in any newly released card set*

# What HAPPEned to My RAtinG?

**H**ave you gone online recently to check your official DCI player rating, only to be surprised at the result? Have you noticed some variation in your rating you were not expecting? Has the DCI mistaken you for your long-lost evil twin? Probably not. The more likely answer is that the DCI player's organization is currently performing routine maintenance on its membership records, and combining the membership numbers of thousands of DCI members who mistakenly acquired multiple membership numbers.

This process can cause noticeable variations, even in an inactive player's official rating. The membership number combination procedure first identifies multiple Personal Identification Numbers (PIN—another word for your DCI membership number) for the same member, removes all but one duplicate record from the system, and combines all match records into one match history. The DCI retains previous PINs in the member's PIN history, which allows the ratings database to process any future matches that use the previous PIN. If this process combines the match history of a given member's previous opponents, those opponents' ratings will be updated at the start of the match records. This changes the win percentage in the official ratings calculation.

The result is variations in ratings for any member, whether active or inactive, who is either the object of a membership number combination or whose match history contains an

opponent whose membership records have been combined. The process that calculates member ratings runs through all the DCI members' match histories each time ratings are processed.

The DCI recently upgraded its Organized Play database, which calculates the official DCI ratings and rankings, permitting the DCI Records Management team to resolve these duplicate membership records using a faster bulk process. Over the course of 1997, the team identified as many as 3,000 individuals with multiple membership

numbers. After the completion of this bulk process, sometime in early February, the official ratings will be even more accurate and stable.

The DCI Policy team recently re-asserted its position that it is against DCI policy for a member

to have more than one membership number. Any DCI member who is aware that he or she has more than one PIN should contact DCI via email or phone so that the records can be updated. A member who desires to participate in DCI-sanctioned tournaments but has misplaced his or her membership card should contact a tournament coordinator who can reference the Arena/DCI Membership list to locate the member's previous PIN. Members with existing PINs should avoid signing up for new membership numbers, and should be aware that DCI and Arena membership numbers are interchangeable—you do not need a separate PIN to participate in both programs.



by Jason Curl, Darrin Culp, and Andrew Finch

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Sun Tzu's *The Art of War*, a classic work written over two thousand years ago, remains possibly the most prestigious and influential book on military strategy ever written. This is the second part of a bi-monthly series of excerpts from an ongoing work titled *Tournament Magic and The Art of War*, wherein Sun Tzu's lessons are applied to the game of *Magic*.

## The Art of Magic: Part Two

*Strategic Advantage on the Magic Battlefield*

In part one of this series, I discussed the importance of preparation on three levels: the metagame, your deck, and your skill as a player. I now turn to an enlightening discussion of battle and tactical advantage. According to the tenets of Sun Tzu, there are three main points to consider when going into battle: deception, speed, and resource management.

### THE ART OF DECEPTION

*A military operation involves deception. Even though you are competent, appear to be incompetent. Though effective, appear to be ineffective.... Attack when they are unprepared, make your move when they do not expect it.*

—Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*

First of all, cheating is not deception—it's just cheating. Unfortunately, in a tournament setting, some players seem to forget there is a difference between honorable deception and

detestable cheating. Even though the strategies of warfare may apply, *Magic* is still a game with rules, and violating those rules is not military intelligence, it's simply cheating.

So, how do you apply the art of deception to the game of *Magic*? In part one, I discussed how to use body language and card placement to telegraph vulnerability, thus providing cues to make your opponent play the way you want. Here, I will briefly explore the second part of Sun Tzu's statement: "Make your move when they do not expect it."

Any attack, whether creature based or spell based, extends your resources and thus often provides a gap for a counterstrike. For example, suppose I attack with my three 4/4 creatures against your little 2/2 blocker. Instead of blocking, you take 12 damage and I am overjoyed—until you Incinerate me twice during my discard phase, untap, cast Endless Scream on your little 2/2 critter, and kill me. I died, in part, because I attacked precisely when you expected me to attack and in a way that provided an opening for you.

Now suppose I was holding a Benalish Knight, which can be cast at instant speed. Then my attack is calculated precisely to bring about that counterattack—to get you to commit your resources to attacking so I can neutralize a threat and achieve even greater advantage. You expected me to do X (attack all out), I expected you to do Y in response (counterattack for the kill), but I have Z (an unexpected blocker) prepared for that response.

The same calculation also applies to defense. You attack with 1/1 Llanowar Elves, I block with my 3/3 Trained Armodon, you Giant Growth the Elves, and I cry. In this case, you carried the calculation to X, then Y, and on to Z, but I only went to Y.

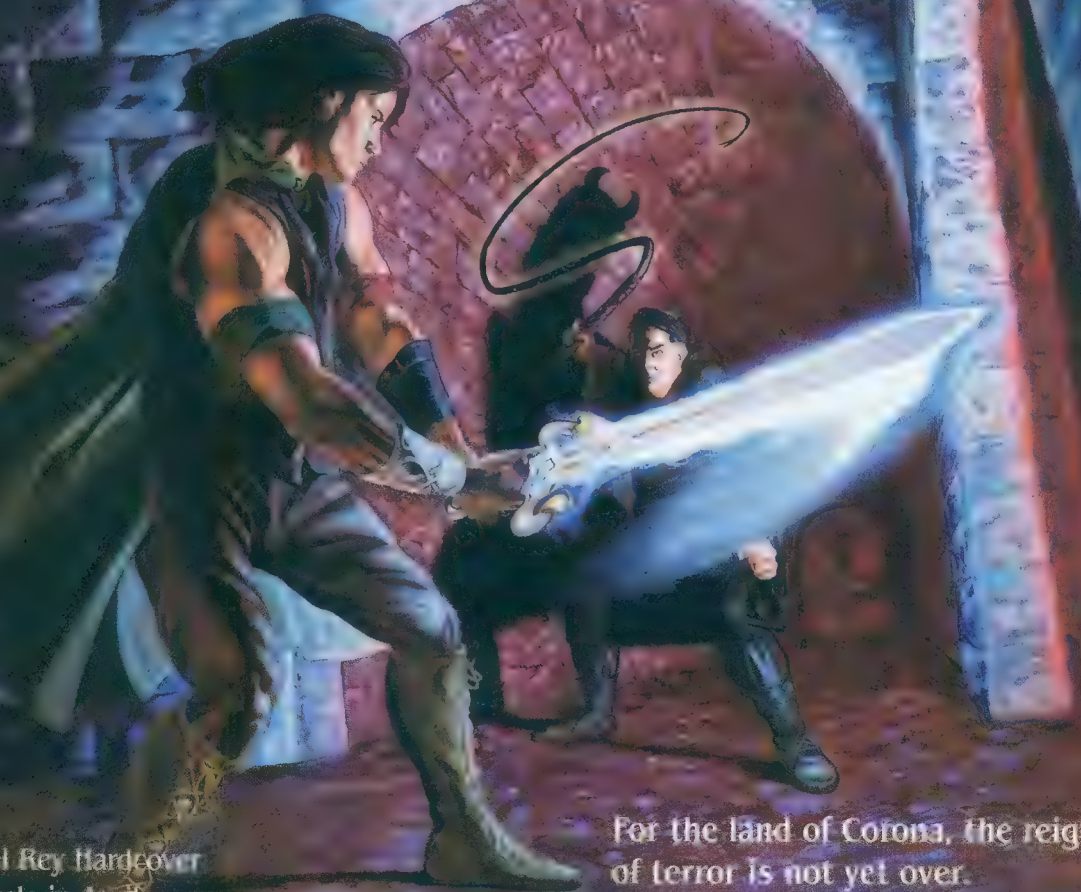
In every situation, it is critical to consider the X, the Y, and the Z. More advanced



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players look several moves into the future, anticipate responses, and prepare surprises. Experienced players should be able to do the XYZ calculus in any situation. This is deception used for tactical advantage—hiding your strength, opening only the gaps you want opened, and striking when and where your opponent won't expect an attack.

#### **SPEED: ADVANTAGE OR NECESSITY?**

*...I have heard of military operations that were clumsy but swift, but I have never seen one that was skillful and lasted a long time.*

—Sun Tzu

Speed is not merely an advantage for a tournament deck, it is an absolute necessity. Even if offense is merely an ancillary

his or her threats. Prosperous Bloom is an example of such a deck.

#### **RESOURCE MANAGEMENT:**

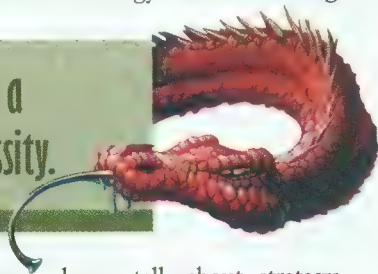
##### **THE KEY TO SUCCESS**

*Those who use the military skillfully do not raise troops twice and do not provide food three times. By taking equipment from your own country but feeding off the enemy you can be sufficient in both arms and provisions.*

—Sun Tzu

Even though you don't need to raise "troops" or feed them in **Magic**, the overall lesson is clear: military victory depends heavily upon proper resource management. It is said amateurs talk about strategy, while professionals discuss supplies. I believe this analogy holds for **Magic**.

**Speed is not merely an advantage for a tournament deck, it is an absolute necessity.**



part of your overall strategy (as in a heavy control or lock deck), your "military operation" must be as fast as possible.

For example, everyone understands that a mono-red Sligh deck is clumsy but swift. Its sheer speed simply rolls over many opponents. On the other hand, few people understand that a blue/red CounterHammer deck is often just as swift. In many instances, the game is over by turn six (even if the opponent appears to be very far from dead) simply because the blue/red player has achieved a stable condition by using red removal and Nevinyrral's Disks, is now holding six counterspells, and has an Ophidian on the table. Defensive speed is still speed, as long as that defense is considered part of the "military operations" of the deck.

Thus, speed is a necessity for military operations—whether those operations involve bashing your opponent down or establishing iron-clad control over the battlefield. The key consideration, then, becomes what tactics you intend to use with the deck and how fast you can put those tactics into play. If turn four is the earliest you can remove a threat, then your deck should focus on removing your opponent by turn four rather than any of

Amateur players talk about strategy—what to do in a given situation with what's in hand. Professional players talk about resources—mana requirements, card advantage, and topdecking.

Anecdotal evidence from tournament players and judges suggests most matches are decided by mana problems of one form or another. Players don't draw enough land and lose, or draw too much of the wrong type of land and lose, or don't draw a needed color and lose. Henry Stern used statistical analysis when figuring out how much of what color mana to put into a deck. Yet, too many players simply add 24 lands to their decks—10 of each color and 4 special lands like Quicksand or Mishra's Factory—and leave it at that.

While there is no hard-and-fast rule for appropriate mana distribution, because every deck is different, it should be clear that no amount of wonderful strategy can overcome a lack of mana resources. Players who win consistently in tournaments overload their mana supplies to ensure they'll have adequate resources for their strategies.

Card advantage is another supply-based obsession of **Magic** professionals, whether

gained through drawing extra cards or through nullifying multiple opponent cards. The 187 creatures like Nekrataal and Uktabi Orangutan truly "feed off" the enemy, while card-drawing engines like Necropotence and Ophidian can quickly turn an even contest into something akin to a desert skirmish between Iraq and the United States. With the possible exception of Prosperous Bloom and Sligh, no single deck has won a major tournament in the modern era without some way of ensuring card advantage.

Finally, let's look at the oft-maligned term "topdecking"—finding a crucial card at a crucial moment in the duel. Most players consider topdecking a joke that proves **Magic** is still a game of luck. However, the best constructed decks are built to take maximum advantage of topdecking. If offense is your focus, don't put cards in your deck that won't aid the offense in some way. Let's say I will win next turn against a Sligh deck unless my opponent draws direct damage. The chances are better than average that this opponent will topdeck some kind of direct damage.

If defense is your focus, be sure you have adequate removal cards in the deck. I wouldn't be surprised if an opponent playing blue/white control topdecks a Wrath of God one turn before he or she is to die. This player probably has four Wraths in the deck but only one or two Disenchants. This construction takes maximum advantage of particular tactical situations, such as being faced with a horde of creatures.

#### **CONCLUSION**

In part one, we saw the importance of proper preparation: metagame, deck, and playing skill. If strategic advantage is gained through preparation in those areas, the next step is to gain tactical advantage by proper preparation for battle. You should be able to engage in tactical deception to expose weaknesses and throw an opponent off balance, mount your strategy (whether offensive or defensive) as fast as possible, and ensure you have adequate resources to carry out your strategy. In part three (*Duelist #26*), I will discuss the art of fighting. ♠

*Robert Hahn does not actually live in Tibet and hates to be called "guru," "sensai," or "master" (well, maybe "master").*



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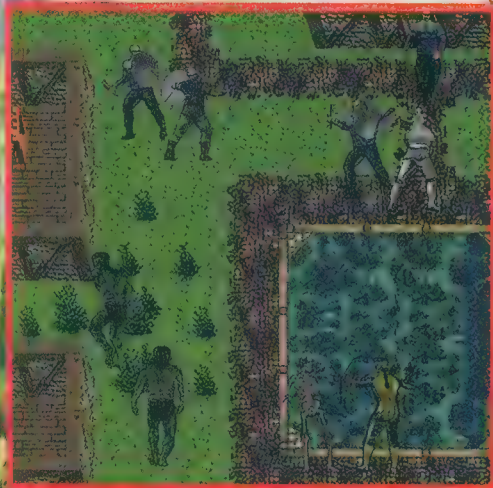
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# DECK DECONSTRUCTION

by Beth "BethMo" Moursund



## Crafting a Horde

*Mesacraft and Goblincraft*



The idea of using Earthcraft and a non-tapping token generator to set up an endlessly repeatable loop seems to have independently sprung up in several places not too long after the release of the *Tempest* expansion. Initially, these decks hit like bombshells, surpassing everyone and winning more than their share of games just because no one was expecting the combination. Word quickly spread through the Net, but even as players learned how to defeat the combination, the loop decks evolved and became stronger.

### LOOP THE LOOP

All Mesacraft decks use the same trick: Wild Growth on a Plains with Earthcraft and Sacred Mesa in play. With this combination in place, you can tap the Plains for mana, create a Wild Pegasus token, then use Earthcraft to tap the Pegasus and untap the Plains. Repeat this loop as many times as you wish, gaining one Pegasus each time. Next turn, attack with the whole herd, or in some versions, feed them through Altar of Dementia or Goblin Bombardment to win the same turn.

If you're using red for Goblin Bombardment, you can also go with an all-Goblin version. The "Goblincraft" loop requires Goblin Warrens, Earthcraft, two Goblins, and three lands (two of them Mountains) to get started. Pay

three mana and sacrifice two Goblins to make three new Goblins; use Earthcraft to tap the three Goblins, untapping the three lands. Each cycle your Goblin population grows by one.

Players generally refer to these combinations as "infinite loops," but they're not actually infinite, just endlessly repeatable.

### BUILDING A MESACRAFT DECK

No single version of Mesacraft has yet emerged as the standard archetype for the deck. There's lots of room for experimentation. Since the key to Mesacraft is a three-card combination, all versions of the deck start with four each of Earthcraft, Sacred Mesa, and Wild Growth. The rest of the cards in the deck fill three objectives:

- 1) Get the key cards into your hand.
- 2) Prevent your opponent from disrupting the combination.
- 3) Stay alive until you get it.

All of the combination cards are enchantments, so Enlightened Tutor is a shoo-in for the first objective. Nearly all Mesacraft decks include four of them. Besides those, you probably want two to six other library-manipulation cards. Sylvan Library, Mirri's Guile, and Scroll Rack each let you look deeper into your library to find the card you need. Some versions of the deck add a third color. Blue for Impulse or Intuition is most common, but we've also seen versions using black's Vampiric Tutor.

Green and white each have spells that pull lands from your library. This serves two purposes: it thins your deck, increasing your odds of drawing key cards, and gives you additional mana. Their shuffling effects also combine well with library-top manipulation. Tithe and Harrow are favorites, but Veteran Explorer, Untamed Wilds, and Nature's Lore have also been used.

Many cards that hurt this deck are enchantments, so Disenchant, Aura of Silence, and/or Emerald Charm are essential. It's probably best to include two or three anti-enchantment spells in the main deck and more in the sideboard. On the turn you plan to attack, Abeyance or City of Solitude can prevent nasty surprises. Versions of the

**Earth to Magic,  
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*In this reinterpretation of Earthcraft, illustrator Randy Gallegos promises he's got nothing up his sleeve.*



"I attack with 1,000 Pegasus tokens." Comments like this were first heard in tournaments last fall, to the consternation of opponents and the amazement of neighboring tables. Welcome to the world of Mesacraft (also known as "Death from Above").

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To others, a desolate vision of unending pain.



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## Mesacraft

A number of different people designed Mesacraft decks independently at about the same time, but this is the earliest example we found posted to the Net with a full tournament report. It was designed by Matthew Vienneau for a local tournament at 401 Convenience in Toronto. He called the deck "It's a Mesacre!"

- 4 Earthcraft
- 4 Sacred Mesa
- 4 Wild Growth
- 4 Enlightened Tutor
- 4 Wall of Roots
- 4 Abeyance
- 4 Gaea's Blessing
- 4 Tariff
- 2 Wrath of God
- 2 Disenchant
- 1 Humility
- 1 Puppet Strings
- 2 Preferred Selection
- 1 Tith
- 3 Grasslands
- 4 Brushland
- 3 Forest
- 8 Plains
- 1 City of Brass



## Goblincraft

This deck was designed by Wizards' own Mons Johnson, who knows a fair bit about goblins...it was he who inspired the ubiquitous "Mons's Goblin Raiders" card.

- 4 Earthcraft
- 1 Emerald Charm
- 1 Fireball
- 1 Goblin Bombardment
- 4 Goblin Vandal
- 1 Goblin Scouts
- 4 Goblin Warrens
- 2 Granger Guildmage
- 2 Hammer of Bogardan
- 4 Incinerate
- 4 Keeper of Kookus
- 4 Mogg Fanatic
- 4 Mogg Raider
- 4 Suq'Ata Lancer
- 2 Vampiric Tutor
- 3 City of Brass
- 2 Forest
- 2 Gemstone Mine
- 10 Mountain
- 1 Undiscovered Paradise

deck using blue usually include Ertai's Meddling and/or Memory Lapse as a defense against counterspells. Some players include Argivian Find or Elven Cache to retrieve cards opponents counter or destroy, and if you happen to draw two of the same enchantment early, you can cast one as bait to draw counterspells and enchantment destruction.

The third category contains spells to help you survive until you get the combination. Two favorites here are Wall of Roots and Wrath of God. Wall of Roots is cheap enough to cast on turn two, can hold off one attacking creature, and gives you another mana source. Most Mesacraft decks include four of them. Wrath of God is the ultimate creature reset button, priceless against any of the fast creature decks, so three or four in the main deck are common. Many versions also include Skyshroud Elf or Quirion Ranger to help with mana, and some of these also add Winter Orb to disrupt an opponent's mana supply.

Speaking of mana, we can't forget the land. This deck doesn't need a lot of land; 20-22 is typical. You need plenty of Plains, since Earthcraft can only untap basic land. Most of your green mana can be supplied by Brushlands, with just a few Forests. Grasslands can retrieve whichever type of land you need and thin your deck in the process. A few Undiscovered Paradises or Cities of Brass may help, too. If you're playing a three-color version, of course, you'll want more of the multi-mana lands or perhaps some two-color lands or fetchlands for your other color.

Finally, some players include Altar of Dementia, allowing them to win by library depletion as soon as they get the last card of the combination in place, rather than waiting until the next turn to attack. In a multicolor version, you can also use Goblin Bombardment for a faster kill.

### PLAYING THE DECK

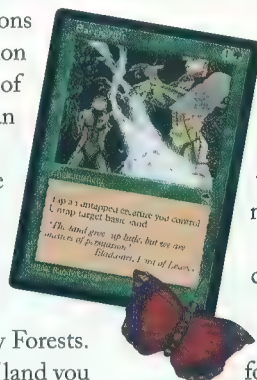
With perfect draws, you can complete your combination as early as turn three: cast Wild Growth on turn two, then tap the Growthed Plains and cast Wall of Roots. Use the Growthed Plains again on turn three to cast Earthcraft, then tap the Wall to untap the land. You now have five mana available, which is enough to cast Sacred Mesa and make your first Pegasus—and you're off.

Usually you'll find one or two parts of the combination (or a Tutor to go get them) early, but have to wait for the last piece. The hardest decision in these cases is when to cast your enchantments. If you cast them as soon as you draw them, you run the risk of facing enchantment destruction (or land destruction if you've cast Wild Growth). Even the

perfect-draw case can be stopped by these. But if you wait until you can cast Abeyance or City of Solitude to do it all in one turn, you may wait a long while and your opponent will chew you up in the meantime. Against a fast deck, you need to be fast yourself, which usually means casting early. Against slower decks, you can afford to play more cautiously—but if you play cautiously against a blue opponent, you may give him or her the time needed to build up a good mana supply and a handful of counterspells, stopping you cold when you finally make your move.

If you find yourself with a lot of mana sources in play but no Earthcraft or Wild Growth, you may be able to win with just Sacred Mesa by pumping out the tokens. It's usually best to do most of your token production during your opponent's discard phase, after the opportunity to cast a mass-destruction spell has passed. If your opponent destroys it before then, respond to the destruction spell by making as many tokens as you can afford.

Dread of Night and Gloom are complete hosers for this deck, as are Orim's Prayer and Propaganda. (You can't use the Earthcraft loop to pay for Propaganda's cost, since it's not legal during the "declare attackers" step when Propaganda is paid.) Nevinyrral's Disk is bad, too. Save your Disenchants (and counterspells, if playing blue) for major threats.



### Goblincraft

The Goblin version of the deck also starts with four Earthcrafts but uses Goblin Warrens instead of Sacred Mesa and no Wild Growth. To start the loop, you need two Goblins in play, so you'll want at least a dozen assorted Goblins; some use as many as 18. Choose Goblins with useful abilities, like Mogg Fanatic and Goblin Recruiter.

An advantage of this version is that it plays like a Goblin-based weenie deck until you get the combination. The disadvantage is that you have no Tutors unless you go with three colors, so you either have a much harder time drawing the combination, or you have a greater chance of mana-color problems. Because of this, Goblincraft hasn't been as popular as Mesacraft.

The best approach to a two-color Goblincraft deck is probably to build a sub-sized Goblin weenie deck, able to win a reasonable amount of the time by itself, and then add just a splash of green for the Earthcraft. 🌿

*BethMo has answered more rules questions than all the Goblin and Pegasus tokens ever created.*

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# THE DRAFTING TABLE

by Eric Tam



## Breaking Out the New Cards

Last month we updated old decks with cards from new expansions. This month, we'll analyze new expansions for breakout cards—those cards with the potential to create entirely new deck types or trigger major changes in the environment.

Finding the best cards in a new set—the breakout cards—is the first step in creating new deck types that can take the environment by storm. However, many newer players have a hard time determining which are the best cards in a new set. With *Stronghold* hitting the stores, let's take a look at breakout cards and how to find them.

Breakout cards tend to fall into four categories: high-powered cards, global effect cards, hand/library manipulation cards, and combinationally explosive cards. While these categories are not mutually exclusive (you'll put some game-breaking cards into more than one category), a firm understanding of the categories will help you determine the breakout cards in a new set.

### THE BIG GUNS

High-powered cards work on the principle of maximization. In terms of power, speed, effectiveness, efficiency, and flexibility, high-powered cards in a new environment are equal to or more powerful than analogous, benchmark cards from the previous environment. The most effective high-powered cards are general-use cards with multiple applications that are useful in a wide variety of situations independent of surrounding cards, can be cast at instant speed, and have a casting cost reflective of the card's power.

Casting cost is especially important for all breakout cards. Any tournament-viable card should have a reasonable casting cost with respect

to its power. Tournament cards will usually cost four or less mana and will never have a casting cost greater than six. In addition, the net effect of a tournament-caliber card must be worth its casting cost and its drawbacks. This is, perhaps, the biggest challenge in determining the usefulness of a card.

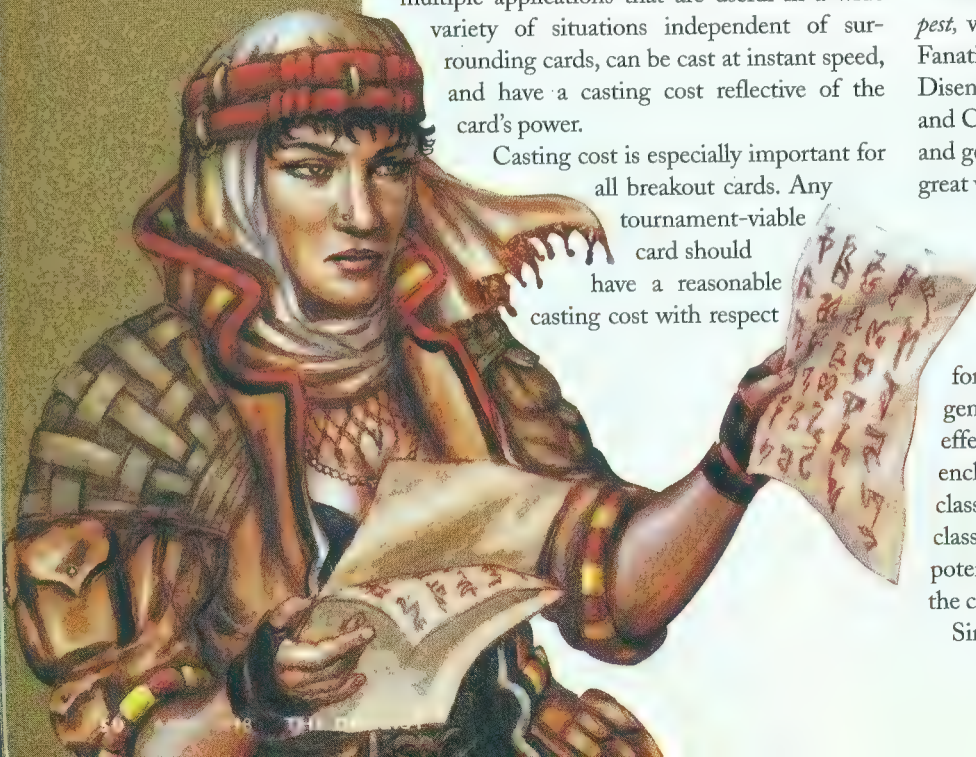
Some of the standard big guns include: instant-speed direct-damage spells capable of inflicting three or more points of damage for two or less mana (Incinerate, Fireblast); cards that provide a one-for-one or one-for-two conversion between a currently useless resource and a more useful resource (Necropotence, Channel, Cadaverous Bloom); interrupts that counter a spell for two or less mana (Counterspell); creatures that can either inflict damage equal to or greater than their casting cost every turn, or have special abilities that provide some control over the flow of the game (Maro, Order of the White Shield, Dwarven Miner, Nekrataal, Man-o'-War); instants that destroy a large class of permanents for two or less mana (Disenchant); and cards that cost less than four mana and can generate a two-for-one (or better) card advantage (Stupor, Earthquake).

Taking a look at high-powered cards in *Tempest*, we find Cursed Scroll, Counterspell, Mogg Fanatic, Goblin Bombardment, Pincer Beetles, Disenchant, Dauthi Slayer, Kindle, Wasteland, and Cloudchaser Eagle. These cards are so strong and generally useful that they can be effective in a great variety of decks and themes.

### THE WHOLE WORLD

Global effect cards can be seen as a subset of high-powered cards. These are suitably costed cards that are effective enough for tournament play, and have the potential to generate tremendous card advantage. Global effects (which are different from global enchantments) can affect all cards of a particular class (such as lands or creatures) or a number of classes at once. Therefore, these cards have the potential to neutralize or augment many cards at the cost of only a single card.

Since global effects often have such a profound





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impact and change the entire shape of the game when played, it is possible to build combination-oriented decks around them. While global spells can certainly be used independently to gain card advantage, the effects of global spells are so broad they easily interact with many cards to create a variety of different, even more powerful combinations. Thus, global effect cards are often the focal point of what Beth Moursund describes as "cluster combination decks." Stasis and Winter Orb are examples of global effects that have anchored such decks.

Two *Tempest* global effect



Manipulation cards actually sacrifice raw card advantage in exchange for increased card quality.

cards with the potential to generate new deck types are Propaganda and Living Death. These two cards are very powerful because they do not need to interact with any specific cards to have a powerful effect on the game, plus they offer players a wealth of nasty combination options (Winter Orb, Armageddon, or Hand to Hand with Propaganda; Ertai's Familiar or Rats of Rath with Living Death).

#### THE CARD CATALOGS

Players interested in creating combination decks have a special interest in library/hand manipulation cards. These cards help you locate and procure the cards needed for the combination, allowing you to play the entire combination as quickly as possible. Impulse, Ancestral Knowledge, and the various Tutor cards from *Mirage* are examples of library and hand manipulation cards. These "search" cards improve the quality of your draw or hand instead of simply providing additional draws, like the effect of traditional card-drawing devices such as Jayemdae Tome.

Most manipulation cards actually sacrifice raw card advantage in exchange for increased card quality. The best manipulation cards for combination decks have a low casting cost and a large search range. In a highly combinational deck, a player usually won't be able to establish much of an offense or defense until certain combi-

nation cards are found. Therefore, it is critical for that player to locate and access specific cards quickly. Gaining a small immediate card advantage or a general increase in draw quality simply is not as important in a combination deck. Ideally, a manipulation card guarantees access to specific cards by allowing the combination-deck player to search the entire library.

Intuition and Scroll Rack from *Tempest* have the potential to be excellent manipulation cards in combination decks. Intuition is rare among search cards, as it is a moderately priced instant with great pre-

cision (assuming you play with four of each combination card) and no raw card disadvantage. Furthermore, Intuition's supposed drawback can even be turned into a benefit when combined with cards that use the graveyard as a resource (such as Recall or Necratog). Although it has a limited search range, Scroll Rack can be extremely powerful because it is fast and allows you to upgrade multiple cards at once. In addition, Scroll Rack interacts in an explosive manner with other search cards that enable you to shuffle your library (Intuition, for example).

Whispers of the Muse and Mirri's Guile, on the other hand, generate effects that improve draw quality or generate card advantage (much like Sylvan Library or Jayemdae Tome). These two cards are not suitable as search cards in combination decks even though they may be powerful in other contexts, or in the case of Whispers of the Muse, as part of another combination.

#### HIGH EXPLOSIVES

The last category of breakout spells are those that explosively promote a resource—almost always mana or cards—in a game-breaking combination. By supplying the necessary resources, these combinationally explosive cards can rapidly generate large amounts of cards or mana to either fuel a combination or to

quickly put that combination into play. The best combinations include explosive cards as part of the combination itself, lending it a sort of catalytic aspect; casting one part of the combination makes it much easier to draw or cast other parts of the combination.

For example, cards like Prosperity in the Prosperous Bloom deck and Howling Mine in the Turbo Stasis, Balance, and Abeyance decks act as catalysts that both create and fuel the game-breaking or game-lock combinations. In fact, all the main elements in the Prosperous Bloom deck—Prosperity, Squandered Resources, and Cadaverous Bloom, as well as Infernal Contract and Natural Balance—are explosive cards.

Since the people who design Magic sets recognize the inherent potential of cards that can quickly generate a lot of cards and mana, the designers have attached either a high price or a big drawback to all of the newer resource-generating cards. Therefore, as with analyzing any other card, the key to finding viable explosive cards for combinations is to recognize whether a card's drawbacks can be overcome or ignored, and whether the effect is worth the costs.

Meditate, Eladamri's Vineyard, Recycle, Whispers of the Muse, Time Warp, Ancient Tomb (mostly in Classic where it can interact with Mirror Universe), Lotus Petal, and the Medallions are the *Tempest* cards I believe have the potential to break out as combinationally explosive cards.

#### AGE OF DISCOVERY

So, as you begin tearing into those *Stronghold* packs this month, keep these four categories in mind. Look at each card you think might be a power card and see where it fits and how it stacks up against the cards I've mentioned here. If you find a card that falls into more than one of the above categories and seems superior to the examples I've given, you may have located the first major breakout card of 1998.

Of course, discovering which individual cards have potential is only the first step in constructing a deck. The real challenge lies in determining how these cards interact effectively with each other and the rest of the environment. It is this aspect of deck construction that gives the game its incredible richness and Magic. ♣



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# UNLOCKING THE STRONGHOLD

*One Card's Journey from Concept to Booster Pack*

BY MICHAEL G. RYAN

The standards for Magic cards are phenomenally high. Have you ever wondered how Wizards of the Coast maintains the high level of playability and collectability you've come to expect?

IT REQUIRES MORE THAN a dozen people to take a Magic card from a concept to a finished product, and each person adds another element to the mix. Integrating the different elements is at least as difficult as creating them in the first place: a simple card idea can become complicated when tested with other cards; the expansion symbol must be determined even before the playtesting is finished; a card's name must reflect its mechanic; the flavor text has to reflect the name *and* the mechanic; and the art needs to support all of these plus, at times, story and setting. It is the organized and coherent process of a card's production that keeps all these disparate elements in line and ensures the high value of hundreds of different Magic cards every year—a daunting process that is past due for closer examination and demystification.

## IDEA

Consider the *Stronghold* card *Awakening*. For a cost of  $\{2\}$ , this green enchantment reads: "At the beginning of each player's upkeep, untap all creatures and lands." Seems pretty straightforward. But when designer Mark Rosewater first created the card (under the less-than-auspicious title "Untap World"), it played a little differently—the green enchant world read "At the beginning of each turn, untap all permanents."

"Ironically," Rosewater said, "the cost of the card was one of the few things that never changed. Magic R&D has what we call 'the rule of four.' Whenever you have a sweeping effect, it should cost at least four mana."

According to Rosewater, the play goals of the card were simple. Normally, players have to stretch their resources over two turns—theirs and their opponent's. "With this enchantment in play," Rosewater continued, "players are not punished for using all their resources during their turn. In fact, Untap World encourages players to make constant use of their resources since they'd be wasting opportunities if they didn't. Players need not leave creatures behind to block, they can tap out entirely, and many other normally unthinkable actions suddenly become very favorable."



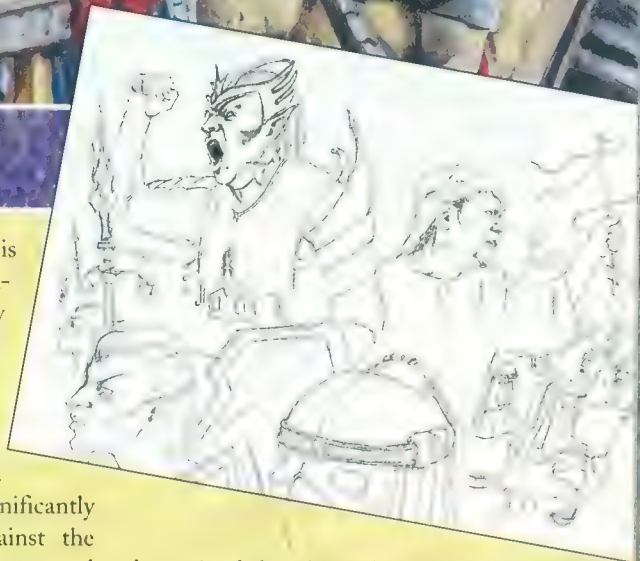
## MEASURE TWICE, CUT ONCE

But how favorable? That's where playtesting comes in. Mons Johnson coordinated external playtesters for the *Stronghold* expansion, providing them direction for which cards to focus on based on a "hit list" provided by the designers and developers. "The playtesters gave us a lot of feedback," Johnson said. "Several of them were concerned about the strengths of this card, particularly with such cards as *Mana Vault*. Playtester Chris Quenelle wrote 'Warning, Will Robinson! *Mana Vaults*? *Depletion lands*? *Leviathans*? Perhaps limit this to creatures?'"

Other playtesters expressed similar concerns. Stephen D'Angelo wrote: "This card may be bro-



**FRAZIER'S FINAL PAINTING** is more than a Magic card; it's a family portrait. Right: the original pencil sketch.



ken. Try with cards like Colossus, Spectral Bears, Mana Vault, and depletion lands. Things like Mana Vault become way strong this way. Buyback instants can be doubly used, as can all tap abilities. I'm very wary of this card. Perhaps it should only untap creatures? Or just lands?"

And playtester Justin Lockshaw said: "Seems to work maybe a little too well when mixed with blue. This wouldn't be too much of a problem if blue and green were not opposed to each other. In fact, I see blue getting much more of a benefit from this card...with its ability to counter, and counter, and counter again."

These comments were then considered by the Magic R&D playtesters, headed by Designer and Developer William Jockusch, who noted that they look for similar things, like broken combos. "It's okay if a combo is strong," he said, "but it

shouldn't blow away whatever is available in the existing environment." To evaluate potentially overpowered combos, the R&D playtesters play "touchstone" decks ("basically Standard constructed decks," according to Jockusch) against them. "If a deck using a new card wins significantly more than half the time against the touchstone decks we change the new card until this is no longer the case."

Designer and Developer Mike Elliott, however, had discovered another critical problem with Untap World's ability to untap permanents every turn: When combined with Sands of Time, Untap World became incredibly powerful. During the development cycle (when the card went from an enchant world to a simple enchantment for the *Tempest* arc), Elliott

determined that the problem was serious enough to require revising the card.

"The way the combo worked was this," Elliott said: "During my turn, I resolve the Sands of Time effect and then the Awakening effect, untapping all my stuff. During *your* turn, I resolve the Awakening effect *first*, then the Sands of Time effect, locking down my opponent. These timing rules are always being revisited, so it may or may not still work this way, but

at the time we were testing the card, it was a two-card lock."

To avoid this problem, Elliott determined that the developers had two options: Raise the card's casting cost until the card played sufficiently slowly that the combo would pretty much disappear, or alter the card so the combination simply didn't work. "Since both problems with the card centered around artifacts," Elliott said, "removing artifacts from the card ability was the simple solution to both problems."

Additionally, Elliott concluded, moving the effect from the beginning of the turn to the beginning of the upkeep simplified interaction with other cards that have beginning-of-turn effects or skip-your-untap effects, such as Stasis.

## A PICTURE AND 100 WORDS

While R&D was taking Untap World through its paces, brand managers and project coordinators at Wizards of the Coast were working with designers to determine the expansion symbol that would ultimately appear on every card in the forthcoming set. Brand Manager Tina Trenkler listed the criteria for choosing a Magic expansion symbol: 1) it must be tied thematically to the expansion set name; 2) it must be immediately obvious to 95 percent of the people what the symbol is when viewed at the size it will appear on a card; 3) the symbol must be an object, rather than text based; 4) the symbol must be clearly distinguishable from all symbols used for Magic over the prior three years; 5) the symbol must be attractive when enlarged to three feet by three feet; and 6) the symbol should be logical and inoffensive internationally. With these parameters in mind, designer Daniel Gelon went to work determining how the symbol would look.

For *Stronghold*, Trenkler said, "we started out by getting suggestions for the expansion symbol from the project team. Daniel then worked up the suggested

GELON'S  
EARLY  
VERSIONS  
of *Stronghold's*  
expansion symbols  
provided a wealth of  
icons from which to  
choose.



options, which included a castle, a window, a key, a lock, a portcullis, and a Mogg's head (just for fun). The project team then reviewed the symbols and provided its recommendations to the Magic team, recommending the portcullis. The Magic team agreed to this symbol, and Daniel then worked up a few variations to ensure we had the best version. Those variations included adding a bottom ledge, more or fewer bars, setting the blocks farther apart, and so on. Finally, we

selected the one that was easiest to identify at the small card size."

As the playtesting wound down, Untap World was changed from affecting permanents to affecting only creatures and lands. The project team settled on the set's expansion symbol, and Untap World began to undergo further modifications as it passed into the hands of the naming and flavor text teams. These teams—headed chiefly by Pete Venters, Jennifer Clarke Wilkes, Brady Dommermuth, Mark Rosewater, and myself—brought various names to the table (including such notables as "Refreshment" or "Wakefulness") for consideration. These names, Venters noted, have to meet certain requirements. "While a name can have a loose or occasionally an abstract connection to the card's power," he said, "it's always best to provide a strong link between the two, and we always try to avoid a name that sounds like it belongs in another color or that suggests a power contradictory to the actual card power." Sorceries, instants, and interrupts, for example, tend to be verbs; enchantments tend to be slightly more abstract nouns.

Once the name was settled on—"Awakening" came out of the first round of naming discussions—Pete Venters was able to consider the art description. As continuity manager, he determines which pieces can and should support the ongoing Magic story, and he considered this piece an ideal opportunity to show the beginning of the uprising against the villain Volrath. His art description reflected

that decision: "A rallying cry from the elven lord Eladamri and the Oracle *en-Vec*. The combined armies of the elves and the Vec respond with vigor. They are preparing for the journey to Volrath's stronghold. However you represent it, it must feel like a lot of people are present."

"Note that the description first states the characters and then the mood," Venters pointed out, "as these are fundamental to giving the right feel to the card. This is then followed by their motivation. Note, too, the wording of the last sentence—while it is important to give a sense that an army is present, the description does not attempt to lumber the artist with having to literally illustrate the whole army. That would be a vast amount of work and would make the card too busy, too cluttered, and lacking enough focus on the major characters."

While the art description passed into the capable hands of Art Director Matt Wilson who arranged its assignment, Venters and the naming team reconvened to consider flavor text for Awakening. "The logical voice was Eladamri, one of the army's leaders and the most appropriate for a green card," Venters said.

So the team went to work drafting various entries for consideration for a variety of cards. Unfortunately, the original submissions for Awakening ("Forward friends! Toward freedom!"; "Let our voices and weapons sing Volrath's funeral dirge!"; "To our enemy, death! To our people, freedom!"; "Sleep no more. Now we are the day, fighting the perpetual night.") left something to be desired. So the team looked at some of the submissions for other cards, some of which were also using Eladamri's voice. Various options were considered, some more seriously than others—"This land is my land; this land is your land. From Volrath's Stronghold to the Skyshroud Forest" was never really under consideration.

"While we were looking at different Eladamri speeches," Mark Rosewater recalled, "we ran into an interesting discovery on a card called Primal Rage. That card's original flavor text ("*Now!*" *A great cry went out, and countless elvish and Vec soldiers charged up the mountain. But for every one of Eladamri's forces, there were two Moggs*) started with Eladamri screaming out a battle cry to start the

attack. Several of the flavor text pieces we liked for Awakening ended with Eladamri screaming out a battle cry. Wouldn't it be cool, we thought, if we could connect two different pieces of flavor text together through the use of a battle cry? We could start Eladamri's speech on Awakening and then explain the aftermath on Primal Rage. As a connector, we would use Eladamri's battle cry as the end of the first piece of flavor text and then repeat it at the beginning of the second piece."

With this in mind, the flavor text team selected two different pieces they liked and sent them back to be reworked. Rosewater described what he wanted from Eladamri's speech was a "Kennedy-esque" sound. "I wanted the reader to feel as if Eladamri was pulling all the proper strings to get his army to go charging bravely into a situation of daunting odds," he said.

Coupled with the revised version of Brady Dommermuth's piece on Primal Rage (which begins where Awakening leaves off), the flavor text was finalized.

## ART FOR MOM'S SAKE

While the naming and flavor selection process was wrapping up, Matt Wilson reviewed Dan Frazier's initial sketch for Awakening.

"Dan did the original Oracle *en-Vec*," Wilson said, "so he was already familiar with one of the characters in the art description. All I needed to do was provide him with a copy of the original Eladamri for reference."

Frazier, whose art book *A Touch of Fantasy* is due out in March, had everything he needed to bring the piece to completion. "My mother and my brother served as models for the Oracle and Eladamri," he said. "My mother lives in a different town, so I tried to combine a couple of different chores at once—I took her down to a doctor's appointment the same day that she posed for the Oracle. But it turned out that her appointment was with an optometrist...so her eyes were

dilated. She put on the costume anyway because she's a great actress, but I needed to light her while I worked. So I had to put a 250-watt bulb between her feet that she ended up staring

THANKS TO  
Frazier's patient brother and mom,  
Magic fans are treated to a card  
that captures the tension and  
drama required



down into the entire time, even with her eyes dilated. She was great."

With only a few minor adjustments to Eladamri's costume, Frazier's original sketch was right on the money—his final piece was very close to that sketch. Eladamri's fierce battle cry now had a strong artist's rendition of the elven lord on the battlefield to make it live.

## IDEAL

Not every Magic card undergoes the same process as Awakening—some cards race right through the system, require minimal playtesting and receive name, flavor text, and final art with little hassle. Other cards stall along the way, require



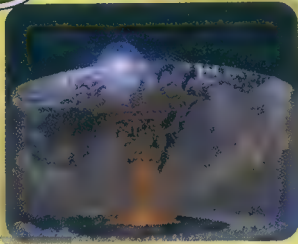
major overhauls during playtesting, refuse to be named after repeated cycles, or demand multiple attempts by artists to get the job done. Awakening fell right in the middle of these two extremes. In the end, Awakening brought card power, name, flavor text, and graphic elements together to form an intriguing new card.

"We try to create cards that have the potential to interact favorably with numerous other cards," summed Rosewater. "Because Awakening works with so many cards that tap for an effect, the enchantment seemed like it would create many cool interactions. We usually try to make the cards balanced, but I personally lean toward erring on the powerful side."

In the end, players will have to decide for themselves if Awakening is an ideal power card, but they can be assured the card's art, play value, and collectability have been held to the most exacting standards possible. Every Magic card can't be a frameable, tournament-breaking masterpiece, but every Magic card is as good as it can possibly be. \*

*Mike Ryan used to wear a funky hat. Now he just wears his funky head.*

# STRONGHOLD STORYBOARD



**Volrath's Stronghold:** The *Weatherlight* finally reaches its destination—Volrath's stronghold, where Gerrard expects to find and save Sisay, Tahngarath, Karn, and Starke's daughter Takara.



**Leap:** As the ship drifts to a halt near one of the stronghold's balconies, the cat warrior Mirri spies a guard and leaps to the attack, killing the guard before the alarm is raised.



**Hidden Retreat:** While Hanna, Orim, and Squee remain behind on the ship, Gerrard, Mirri, Crovax, and Starke disembark in search of their imprisoned companions. They arrange to meet again later.



**Bottomless Pit:** Volrath's lair rises to great heights and plummets to incredible depths. Gerrard and the others, guided by Starke, move deep into the stronghold's core.



**Amok:** Suddenly, the group runs into a shapeshifter. Crovax attacks it, giving chase when it tries to escape. In a fit of uncontrolled violence, he kills the creature after cornering it in a dark room.



**Megrin:** Crovax reels from the pain pounding in his head. The curse he has carried all this time is finally taking its toll and Gerrard can do little to help his friend.



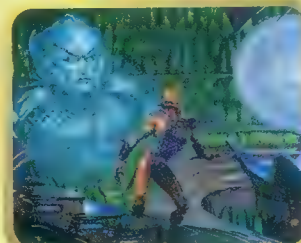
**Invasion Plans:** Looking around the room into which they chased the shapeshifter, Gerrard realizes they've stumbled onto an elaborate map that outlines a future invasion of Dominaria!



**Skyshrroud Archer:** Meanwhile, the Skyshrroud elves and the Vec have reached Volrath's lair. Alongside the Kor and the Dal, their army prepares to lay siege to the stronghold.



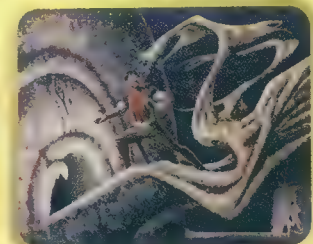
**Awakening:** Eladamri, Lord of Leaves, and the Oracle *en-Vec* rally their forces as the battle begins.



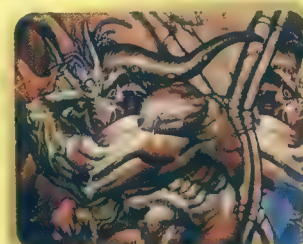
**Intruder Alarm:** When the army attacks, a ghostly apparition of Volrath raises an alarm all over the stronghold, including in the map room. Gerrard suggests they'd better get moving...



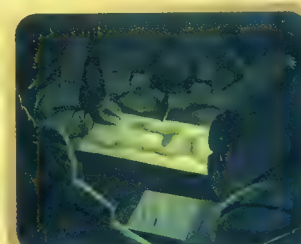
**Contemplation:** ...not realizing that Volrath is watching their every step.



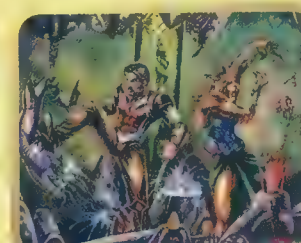
**Ensnaring Bridge:** In order to reach the prison labs where Starke says they may find Sisay and the others, Gerrard and his group must first battle their way past a flowstone bridge that guards the cells.



**Torment:** They finally reach the cells but fail to find Sisay. They do, however, free Karn and Tahngarath. The minotaur has been deformed during his imprisonment, and he is devastated by the changes.



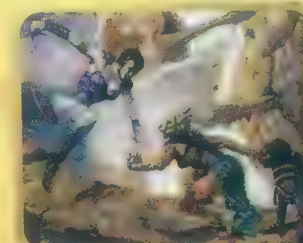
**Volrath's Laboratory:** Beyond the cells, they find the labs where Volrath creates all manner of vile creatures.



**Ransack:** There they discover Sisay entombed in a glass cylinder. Gerrard and his companions tear the lab apart searching for a way to free Sisay from her stasis.



**Volrath's Shapeshifter:** But when they finally break the glass, the Sisay who steps out is not what they expect. She is actually one of Volrath's monstrosities, and the group is forced to continue the hunt.



**Provoke:** As they climb the bridges higher into Volrath's stronghold, they are suddenly attacked by the dark angel Selena, who zeroes in on the surprised Crovax. Mirri leaps to his defense...



**Sword of the Chosen:** ...only to be cut down by the angel's blade.



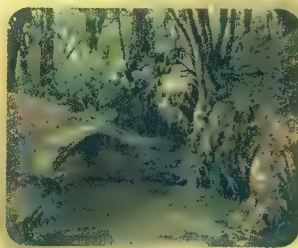
**Death Stroke:** As Mirri falls, horribly wounded, Crovax regains his senses and defends himself against Selena. With no other choice, he strikes a killing blow. Selena dies.



**Crovax the Cursed:** And when she dies, Crovax's curse is realized. He grows fangs, feels his blood run cold, and collapses into unconsciousness as his transformation into a vampire continues.



**Conviction:** The party splits up—Gerrard and Starke continue to search for Sisay and Takara, while Karn and Tahngarth take Mirr and Crovax back to the ship.



**Volrath's Gardens:** Starke leads Gerrard into an overgrown, open-air garden as they head for Volrath's Dream Halls, where Starke thinks they may find Sisay.



**Hesitation:** The *Predator*, Volrath's flying ship, passes overhead, and Gerrard cautions Starke not to move in case Commander Greven #Vec is searching for them.



**Spike Soldier:** As they prepare to move on, a horde of vicious spike creatures attack. No sooner have they overcome one obstacle than...



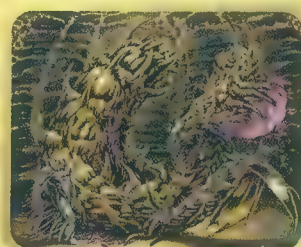
**Brush with Death:** ...the plants themselves become an obstacle, coming to life and nearly killing Starke.



**Sift:** Meanwhile, Tahngarth and Karn have split up, because Karn has discovered the location of the missing Legacy artifacts Greven #Vec stole from the *Weatherlight*. He vows to get them back.



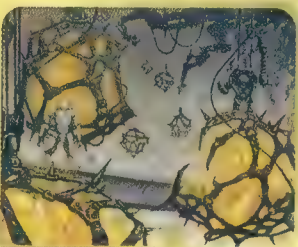
**Sliver Queen:** But the stolen legacy artifacts are guarded by the terrifying Sliver Queen.



**Change of Heart:** Karn is able to empathize with the Sliver Queen, showing her that the Legacy is a part of him just as the Slivers are a part of her. She allows him to leave with the artifacts.



**Shifting Wall:** Gerrard and Starke have reached the tower of the Dream Halls, but there appears to be no entrance. Gerrard is forced to climb the ever-changing flowstone tower to reach the upper floors.



**Dream Halls:** In the Dream Halls, which serve as a living museum for all the dreams and nightmares Volrath has ever had, Rath's evincar is waiting.



**Temper:** Gerrard feels the fury rise in him as at last he faces his enemy—who is, in fact, his blood brother. Volrath was once Vuel, who destroyed the warclan that raised them both.



**Reins of Power:** Gerrard moves to attack, but Volrath has no intention of fighting one-on-one. He uses a mind-controlled Sisay and Takara (Starke's daughter) to battle Gerrard.



**Contempt:** Volrath steps forward to face Gerrard, but Starke leaps forward and plunges a knife into Volrath's back. Unaffected, the evincar bats Starke aside.



**Heat of Battle:** Takara then turns on her father as Gerrard tries once again to close on the escaping Volrath. Takara's blade slashes across Starke's eyes and he falls.



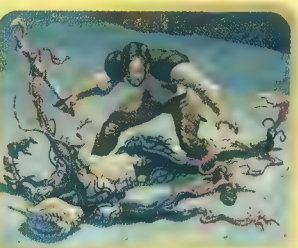
**Bandage:** With Volrath's retreat, Sisay and Takara are suddenly freed from the evincar's control. Takara's reunion with her father is bittersweet as she bandages his ruined eyes.



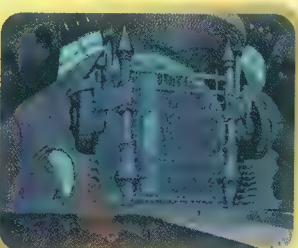
**Seething Anger:** As Gerrard closes on Volrath, he is surprised to be joined by Tahngarth, who has returned from the ship to aid his friend and seek revenge for his torture.



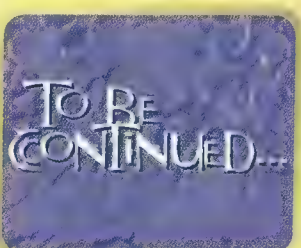
**Smite:** At last, Gerrard faces his enemy. After a short, but brutal fight, Gerrard strikes the killing blow.



**Scapegoat:** And then the truth is revealed: Volrath has planned this encounter well, for as the body falls, it changes shape, turning back into the shapeshifter it had been from the beginning.



**Portcullis:** Outside, the battle for Volrath's stronghold wages on. Inside, Gerrard and his friends, joined at last by Sisay, now face the daunting challenge of escaping as Volrath's forces close in on them.



## THE SPARKLER

### Lands (27)

- 14 Island
- 13 Mountain

### Creatures (3)

- 1 Wall of Tears\*
- 1 Mogg Fanatic
- 1 Wall of Razors\*

### Other (30)

- 1 Mind Games\*
- 1 Whispers of the Muse
- 2 Power Sink
- 2 Spell Blast
- 1 Contempt\*
- 3 Mana Leak\*
- 1 Counterspell
- 2 Capsize
- 1 Intruder Alarm\*
- 2 Propaganda
- 1 Ransack\*
- 1 Reins of Power\*
- 1 Evacuation\*
- 2 Shock\*
- 2 Flowstone Blade\*
- 1 Searing Touch
- 1 Shatter
- 2 Fanning the Flames\*
- 3 Lightning Blast

## CALL OF THE KOR

### Lands (24)

- 13 Plains
- 11 Swamp

### Creatures (23)

- 3 Nomads *en-Kor*\*
- 1 Shaman *en-Kor*\*
- 2 Warrior *en-Kor*\*
- 1 Soltari Champion\*
- 2 Knight of Dawn
- 1 Cloudchaser Eagle
- 4 Spirit *en-Kor*\*
- 2 Lancers *en-Kor*\*
- 2 Lab Rats\*
- 1 Skeleton Scavengers\*
- 1 Darkling Stalker
- 2 Gravedigger
- 1 Screeching Harpy

### Other (13)

- 1 Flickering Ward
- 1 Smite\*
- 1 Disenchant
- 1 Tamper\*
- 1 Death Stroke\*
- 2 Enfeeblement
- 1 Dark Banishing
- 2 Evincar's Justice
- 3 Endless Scream

## MIGRAINE

### Lands (24)

- 24 Swamp

### Creatures (15)

- 2 Pit Imp
- 4 Dauthi Horror
- 1 Rabid Rats\*
- 2 Dauthi Slayer
- 4 Foul Imp\*
- 1 Mindwarper\*
- 1 Dauthi Mindripper

### Other (21)

- 1 Dark Ritual
- 2 Mind Peel\*
- 4 Death Stroke\*
- 2 Diabolic Edict
- 3 Coercion
- 1 Dark Banishing
- 3 Megrim\*
- 2 Bottomless Pit\*
- 1 Ensnaring Bridge\*
- 1 Hornet Cannon\*
- 1 Portcullis\*

## THE SPIKES

### Lands (21)

- 12 Forest
- 9 Mountain

### Creatures (25)

- 4 Spike Drone
- 1 Bayou Dragonfly
- 1 Canopy Spider
- 1 Hermit Druid\*
- 4 Skyskroud Elf
- 1 Lowland Basillisk\*
- 2 Pincher Beetles
- 3 Spike Worker\*
- 1 Tempting Lizard\*
- 2 Spike Feeder\*
- 1 Spike Breeder\*
- 2 Spike Soldier\*
- 2 Spike Colony\*

### Other (14)

- 2 Shock\*
- 4 Kindle
- 1 Fanning the Flames\*
- 1 Elven Rite\*
- 2 Rampant Growth
- 1 Verdant Touch\*
- 1 Tranquility
- 2 Heartstone\*

\* From Stronghold

# PRECONSTRUCTED DECKS

by Garon Galloway

## THE SPARKLER

If you hide behind The Sparkler's walls and liberally apply its direct damage, you should survive the early game long enough to set up Propaganda and/or Intruder Alarms, which will give you the mana buildup you'll need for the numerous recursive spells you'll cast in the mid- and late-game.

This deck has plenty of extra land for counterspells and buyback spells, and the use of these spells is important to your strategy. A full two thirds of the cards in The Sparkler can be used to shut down your opponent's creatures, like Mind Games (a buyback version of Twiddle). This gives you the freedom to save your counterspells and use them against your opponent's key cards.

The surprise card is Reigns of Power, which allows you to borrow your opponent's creatures (with no summoning sickness) until the end of a turn—kind of like a super Ray of Command. The drawback of giving up your own creatures for the turn will be negligible, because you only have three in the deck.



## CALL OF THE KOR

Low casting costs give Call of the Kor the ability to accelerate full speed and head-on into an opponent. Wave after wave of small creatures will swarm your opponent, and this damage will add up quickly unless the opponent can respond. Shaman *en-Kor* is the key card in this deck: It allows you to scoop up damage and spread it liberally among the rest of your creatures, or to dump on one Lab Rat token.

Knight of Dawn and Gravedigger are your mid- and late-game advantage cards. Knight of Dawn can avoid most of your opponent's spells and effects with its ability to choose which color it has protection from, and since it doesn't tap to use this ability, you can choose multiple times. Gravedigger provides a bonus creature when it hits the table, which not only helps with card advantage but also allows you to seek out specific tools like the Shaman, Cloudchaser Eagle, or Knight of Dawn.

The showstopper here is Endless Scream. Once you have a creature that is untouchable by your opponent, add a Scream to apply the big hurt!

## MIGRAINE

Migraine is the type of resource-denial deck that will give your opponent nightmares as well as headaches. Not only does it go after the cards in your opponent's hand, it also prevents creatures from attacking.

The Imps and Dauthis provide some quick weenies to keep you competitive in the early game. Death Stroke, Diabolic Edict, and Dark Banishing can be used to go after your opponent's creatures and keep you alive. The card with extra jaw-dropping potential is Mindwarper. For only four mana, it can either apply a beatdown or go for the forced discard.

In the mid-game you can turn your attention to eliminating your opponent's hand with Mindripper, Mindwarper, and Mind Peel. The real annoyance for your opponent comes when Bottomless Pit and Ensnaring Bridge are on the table. Ensnaring Bridge prevents any creatures with power greater than your hand size from attacking, and since you'll be able to keep your hand size around zero or one, you'll never be in any danger.

To finish off your opponent you can use one of the Megrim enchantments...or two, or three! Every one of your opponent's discards will cause 2 damage per Megrim. What a painful way to go!



## THE SPIKES

The Spikes deck shows how powerful a group of green critters can be. All of the Spikes have an inherent ability to share strength. This comes in handy if one of them gets targeted for destruction. As long as you have access to mana (and especially if you have a Heartstone in play), you can roll with the punches and not lose +1/+1 counters until you're ready.

If you get in trouble, you can live off of your Spike Feeder for 2 life per counter. If you're in a game in which only small creatures can attack, simply wait until after the small Spike is declared as an attacker, then load up with +1/+1 counters. This deck also dips into red for direct damage, a flexible resource you can use to either light up blockers and clear the path for attackers, or to finish off an opponent once and for all.

Your best finisher is Spike Soldier. It can absorb all of its fellow Spikes' counters, then dump them for the huge boost in size for the kill!

Garon Galloway is rapidly becoming The Duelist's most rapid author.



# CARD LIST

CARD NAME	TYPE	ILLUSTRATION	RARITY	CARD NAME	TYPE	ILLUSTRATION	RARITY
<b>Black</b>				<b>Red</b>			
■ Bottomless Pit	Enchantment	Key Walker	U	■ Amok	Enchantment	Dermot Power	R
■ Brush with Death	Sorcery	Stephen Daniele	C	■ Convulsing Lcid	Summon Lcid	Scott Kirschner	U
■ Cannibalize	Sorcery	Robert Bliss	C	■ Craven Giant	Summon Giant	Brian Snoddy	C
■ Corrupting Lcid	Summon Lcid	Thomas M. Baxa	U	■ Duct Crawler	Summon Insect	Stephen Daniele	C
■ Crovax the Cursed	Summon Legend	Pete Venters	R	■ Fanning the Flames	Sorcery	Ron Spencer	U
■ Dauthi Trapper	Summon Minion	Thomas M. Baxa	U	■ Flame Wave	Sorcery	Donato Giancola	U
■ Death Stroke	Sorcery	Colin MacNeil	C	■ Fling	Instant	Paolo Parente	C
■ Dungeon Shade	Summon Spirit	Jason Alexander Behnke	C	■ Flowstone Blade	Enchant Creature	L. A. Williams	U
■ Foul Imp	Summon Imp	Jim Nelson	C	■ Flowstone Hellion	Summon Beast	Daren Bader	C
■ Grave Pact	Enchantment	Scott Kirschner	R	■ Flowstone Mauler	Summon Beast	Paolo Parente	R
■ Lab Rats	Sorcery	DiTerlizzi	C	■ Flowstone Shambler	Summon Beast	Jim Nelson	C
■ Megrim	Enchantment	Donato Giancola	U	■ Furnace Spirit	Summon Spirit	Jeff Miracola	C
■ Mind Peel	Sorcery	Adam Rex	C	■ Heat of Battle	Enchantment	Matthew Wilson	U
■ Mindwarper	Summon Spirit	Paolo Parente	R	■ Invasion Plans	Enchantment	Pete Venters	R
■ Morgue Thrull	Summon Thrull	Robert Bliss	C	■ Mob Justice	Sorcery	Ron Spencer	C
■ Mortuary	Enchantment	Robert Bliss	R	■ Mogg Bombers	Summon Goblins	Dermot Power	C
■ Rabid Rats	Summon Rats	Matthew Wilson	C	■ Mogg Flunkies	Summon Goblins	Brom	C
■ Revenant	Summon Spirit	Terese Nielsen	R	■ Mogg Infestation	Sorcery	Pete Venters	R
■ Serpent Warrior	Summon Soldier	Ron Spencer	R	■ Mogg Maniac	Summon Goblin	Brian Snoddy	U
■ Skeleton Scavengers	Summon Skeletons	Brian Snoddy	C	■ Ruination	Sorcery	Dermot Power	R
■ Stronghold Assassin	Summon Assassin	Matthew Wilson	R	■ Seething Anger	Sorcery	Val Mayerik	C
■ Stronghold Taskmaster	Summon Minion	Brom	U	■ Shard Phoenix	Summon Phoenix	Paolo Parente	R
■ Torment	Enchant Creature	Paolo Parente	C	■ Shock	Instant	Randy Gallegos	C
■ Tortured Existence	Enchantment	Keith Parkinson	C	■ Spitting Hydra	Summon Hydra	Daren Bader	R
■ Wall of Souls	Summon Wall	John Matson	U	■ Wall of Razors	Summon Wall	Michael Sutfin	U
<b>Blue</b>				<b>White</b>			
■ Cloud Spirit	Summon Spirit	Randy Gallegos	C	□ Bandage	Instant	Rebecca Guay	U
■ Contempt	Enchant Creature	Val Mayerik	C	□ Calming Lcid	Summon Lcid	D. Alexander Gregory	C
■ Dream Halls	Enchantment	Matthew Wilson	R	□ Change of Heart	Instant	Ron Spencer	C
■ Dream Prowler	Summon Illusion	Richard Kane Ferguson	C	□ Contemplation	Enchantment	Brom	U
■ Evacuation	Instant	Rob Alexander	R	□ Conviction	Enchant Creature	Paolo Parente	C
■ Gliding Lcid	Summon Lcid	Heather Hudson	U	□ Hidden Retreat	Enchantment	Terese Nielsen	R
■ Hammerhead Shark	Summon Fish	Stephen Daniele	C	□ Honor Guard	Summon Soldier	Joel Biske	C
■ Hesitation	Enchantment	Pete Venters	U	□ Lancers <i>en-Kor</i>	Summon Soldiers	Pete Venters	U
■ Intruder Alarm	Enchantment	Donato Giancola	R	□ Nomads <i>en-Kor</i>	Summon Soldiers	Val Mayerik	C
■ Leap	Instant	Key Walker	C	□ Pursuit of Knowledge	Enchantment	DiTerlizzi	R
■ Mana Leak	Interrupt	Christopher Rush	C	□ Rolling Stones	Enchantment	John Matson	R
■ Mask of the Mimic	Instant	Heather Hudson	U	□ Sacred Ground	Enchantment	Terese Nielsen	R
■ Mind Games	Instant	Andrew Robinson	C	□ Samite Blessing	Enchant Creature	Rebecca Guay	C
■ Ransack	Sorcery	Ron Spencer	U	□ Scapegoat	Instant	Daren Bader	U
■ Rebound	Interrupt	Doug Chaffee	U	□ Shaman <i>en-Kor</i>	Summon Cleric	Jeff Miracola	R
■ Reins of Power	Instant	Colin MacNeil	R	□ Skyskroud Falcon	Summon Bird	Mike Raabe	C
■ Sift	Sorcery	Pete Venters	C	□ Smiter	Instant	Daren Bader	C
■ Silver Wyvern	Summon Drake	Colin MacNeil	R	□ Soltari Champion	Summon Soldier	Adam Rex	C
■ Spindrift Drake	Summon Drake	Anthony S. Waters	C	□ Spirit <i>en-Kor</i>	Summon Spirit	John Matson	R
■ Thalagos Deceiver	Summon Wizard	Andrew Robinson	R	□ Temper	Instant	Matthew Wilson	U
■ Tidal Surge	Sorcery	Doug Chaffee	C	□ Venerable Monk	Summon Cleric	Terese Nielsen	C
■ Tidal Warrior	Summon Merfolk	Daren Bader	C	□ Wall of Essence	Summon Wall	Adam Rex	U
■ Volrath's Shapeshifter	Summon Shapeshifter	Ron Spencer	R	□ Warrior Angel	Summon Angel	Brom	U
■ Walking Dream	Summon Illusion	Richard Kane Ferguson	U	□ Warrior <i>en-Kor</i>	Summon Knight	Stephen Daniele	U
■ Wall of Tears	Summon Wall	Rebecca Guay	U	□ Youthful Knight	Summon Knight	Rebecca Guay	C
<b>Green</b>				<b>Artifact</b>			
■ Awakening	Enchantment	Dan Frazier	R	■ Bullwhip	Artifact	Brom	U
■ Burgeoning	Enchantment	Randy Gallegos	R	■ Ensnaring Bridge	Artifact	Pete Venters	R
■ Carnassid	Summon Beast	Brom	R	■ Heartstone	Artifact	John Matson	U
■ Constant Mists	Instant	Dermot Power	U	■ Horn of Greed	Artifact	Jeff Miracola	R
■ Crossbow Ambush	Instant	Key Walker	U	■ Hornet Cannon	Artifact	Ron Spencer	U
■ Elven Rite	Sorcery	Jeff Miracola	C	■ Jinxed Ring	Artifact	M. W. Kaluta and DiTerlizzi	R
■ Endangered Armodon	Summon Elephant	Key Walker	C	■ Mox Diamond	Artifact	Dan Frazier	R
■ Hermit Druid	Summon Druid	Heather Hudson	R	■ Portcullis	Artifact	Key Walker	U
■ Lowland Basilisk	Summon Basilisk	Randy Gallegos	C	■ Shifting Wall	Artifact Creature	Michael Sutfin	R
■ Mulch	Sorcery	Rebecca Guay	C	■ Sword of the Chosen	Legendary Artifact	Adam Rex	R
■ Overgrowth	Enchant Land	Rob Alexander	U	■ Volrath's Laboratory	Artifact	Brom	R
■ Primal Rage	Enchantment	Brian Snoddy	C	<b>Multicolor</b>			
■ Provoke	Instant	Terese Nielsen	C	■ Acidic Sliver	Summon Sliver	Jeff Miracola	U
■ Skyskroud Archer	Summon Elf	Jeff Miracola	C	■ Crystalline Sliver	Summon Sliver	L. A. Williams	U
■ Skyskroud Troopers	Summon Elves	DiTerlizzi	C	■ Hibernation Sliver	Summon Sliver	Scott Kirschner	U
■ Spike Breeder	Summon Spike	Adam Rex	R	■ Silver Queen	Summon Legend	Ron Spencer	R
■ Spike Colony	Summon Spike	Douglas Shuler	U	■ Spined Sliver	Summon Sliver	Ron Spencer	U
■ Spike Feeder	Summon Spike	Heather Hudson	C	■ Victual Sliver	Summon Sliver	Terese Nielsen	U
■ Spike Soldier	Summon Spike	Randy Elliott	U	<b>Land</b>			
■ Spike Worker	Summon Spike	Daniel Gelon	C	■ Volrath's Stronghold	Legendary Land	Key Walker	R
■ Spined Wurm	Summon Wurm	Keith Parkinson	C	<b>KEY:</b> ■ = Black ■ = Blue ■ = Green ■ = Multicolor ■ = Red □ = White			
■ Tempting Lcid	Summon Lcid	Randy Gallegos	U	■ = Artifact ■ = Land C = Common U = Uncommon R = Rare			
■ Verdant Touch	Sorcery	M. W. Kaluta and DiTerlizzi	R				
■ Volrath's Gardens	Enchantment	Rob Alexander	R				
■ Wall of Blossoms	Summon Wall	Heather Hudson	U				

# STRONGHOLD

## PLAYER'S GUIDE



### Black

#### Bottomless Pit

Enchantment  
Uncommon

1 ☠☠  
Illus. Kev Walker  
During each player's upkeep, that player discards a card at random. "I'm sure it came with the place. I don't think you build one on purpose." —Gerrard

#### Brush with Death

Sorcery  
Common

2 ☠  
Illus. Stephen Daniele  
Buyback 2 ☠☠ (You may pay an additional 2 ☠☠ when you play this spell. If you do, put it into your hand instead of your graveyard as part of the spell's effect.) Target opponent loses 2 life. You gain 2 life.

#### Cannibalize

Sorcery  
Common

1 ☠  
Illus. Robert Bliss  
Choose two target creatures controlled by any one player. Remove one of those creatures from the game and put two +1/+1 counters on the other. "Mine."

#### Corrupting Lcid

Summon Lcid  
Uncommon

2 ☠  
2/2  
Illus. Thomas M. Baxa  
☠, ☠: Corrupting Lcid loses this ability and becomes a creature enchantment that reads "Enchanted creature cannot be blocked except by artifact creatures and black creatures" instead of a creature. Move Corrupting Lcid onto target creature. You may pay ☠ to end this effect.

**Crovax the Cursed**  
Summon Legend  
Rare  
2 ☠☠  
0/0  
Illus. Pete Venters  
Crovax the Cursed counts as a Vampire.

Crovax comes into play with four +1/+1 counters on it. During your upkeep, sacrifice a creature and put a +1/+1 counter on Crovax, or remove a +1/+1 counter from Crovax. ☠: Crovax gains flying until end of turn.

#### Dauthi Trapper

Summon Minion  
Uncommon

2 ☠  
1/1  
Illus. Thomas M. Baxa  
☠: Target creature gains shadow until end of turn. (This creature can block or be blocked by only creatures with shadow.) Merfolk tell their young of Dandán, humans of Rag Man. Dal tell tales of the Dauthi, and they are far worse.



#### Death Stroke

Sorcery  
Common

☠☠  
Illus. Colin MacNeill  
Destroy target tapped creature. For a sharp second, Selenia froze, and Crovax's blade found home. As the angel shattered like glass, Crovax felt his mind collapse—the curse had been fulfilled.

#### Dungeon Shade

Summon Spirit  
Common

3 ☠  
1/1  
Illus. Jason Alexander Behnke  
Flying  
☠: Dungeon Shade gets +1/+1 until end of turn. A sickness stirs in its eyes, a nightmare born in darkened walls.

#### Foul Imp

Summon Imp  
Common

☠☠  
2/2  
Illus. Jim Nelson  
Flying  
When Foul Imp comes into play, lose 2 life. The imp, unaware of its own odor, paused to catch its breath...and promptly died.

#### Grave Pact

Enchantment  
Rare

1 ☠☠☠  
Illus. Scott Kirschner  
Whenever any creature you control is put into any graveyard, each other player sacrifices a creature. "The bonds of loyalty can tie one to the grave." —Crovax

#### Lab Rats

Sorcery  
Common

☠  
Illus. DiTerlizzi  
Buyback 4 (You may pay an additional 4 when you play this spell. If you do, put it into your hand instead of your graveyard as part of the spell's effect.) Put a Rat token into play. Treat this token as a 1/1 black creature.

#### Megrim

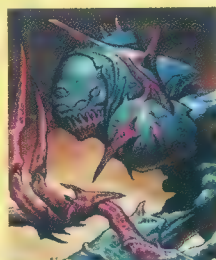
Enchantment  
Uncommon

2 ☠  
Illus. Donato Giancola  
Whenever any opponent discards a card, Megrim deals 2 damage to him or her. "You can run from your pain," explained Gerrard to Crovax, "but take it from experience: you will tire before it does."

#### Mind Peel

Sorcery  
Uncommon

☠  
Illus. Adam Rex  
Buyback 2 ☠☠ (You may pay an additional 2 ☠☠ when you play this spell. If you do, put it into your hand instead of your graveyard as part of the spell's effect.) Target player chooses and discards a card.



#### Mindwarper

Summon Spirit  
Rare

2 ☠☠  
0/0  
Illus. Paolo Parente  
Mindwarper comes into play with three +1/+1 counters on it. 2 ☠. Remove a +1/+1 counter from Mindwarper: Target player chooses and discards a card. Play this ability as a sorcery.



#### Morgue Thrull

Summon Thrull  
Common

2 ☠  
2/2  
Illus. Robert Bliss  
Sacrifice Morgue Thrull: Put the top three cards of your library into your graveyard. It's so hard to find good help these days.

#### Mortuary

Enchantment  
Rare

3 ☠  
Illus. Robert Bliss  
Whenever any creature is put into your graveyard from play, put that creature on top of your library. "Think of them not as failures but as works in progress." —Volrath

#### Rabid Rats

Summon Rats  
Common

1 ☠  
1/1  
Illus. Matthew Wilson  
☠: Target blocking creature gets -1/-1 until end of turn. Every sentence in Volrath's prisons ends the same way.

#### Revenant

Summon Spirit  
Rare

4 ☠  
"A"  
Illus. Terese Nielsen  
Flying  
Revenant has power and toughness each equal to the number of creature cards in your graveyard. "Not again." —Hans

#### Serpent Warrior

Summon Soldier  
Common

2 ☠  
3/3  
Illus. Ron Spencer  
When Serpent Warrior comes into play, lose 3 life. A hiss before dying.

#### Skeleton Scavengers

Summon Skeletons  
Rare

2 ☠  
0/0  
Illus. Brian Snoddy  
Skeleton Scavengers comes into play with one +1/+1 counter on it.

Pay ☠ for each +1/+1 counter on Skeleton Scavengers: Regenerate Skeleton Scavengers and put a +1/+1 counter on it.

#### Stronghold Assassin

Summon Assassin  
Rare

1 ☠☠  
2/1  
Illus. Matthew Wilson  
☠, ☠: Sacrifice a creature: Destroy target nonblack creature. The assassin sees only throats and hears only heartbeats.

#### Stronghold Taskmaster

Summon Minion  
Uncommon

2 ☠☠  
4/3  
Illus. Brom  
All other black creatures get -1/-1. "With the completion of each joyous task, we are closer to Yawgmoth's divine vision." —Stronghold architect, journal

#### Torment

Enchant Creature  
Common

1 ☠  
Illus. Paolo Parente  
Enchanted creature gets -3/-0. "Volrath has killed me. All that remains of me is the scar!" —Taingarth

#### Tortured Existence

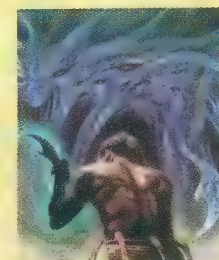
Enchantment  
Common

☠  
Illus. Keith Parkinson  
☠. Choose and discard a creature card: Return target creature card from your graveyard to your hand. "There are terrors lurking in the unseen corners of us all." —Crovax

#### Wall of Souls

Summon Wall  
Uncommon

3 ☠  
0/4  
Illus. John Matson  
(Walls cannot attack.)  
Whenever Wall of Souls is dealt combat damage, it deals an equal amount of damage to target opponent. "It is the nature of evil to turn you against yourself." —Starke



### Blue

#### Cloud Spirit

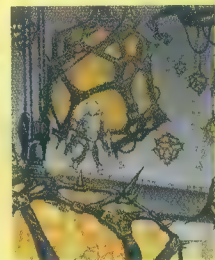
Summon Spirit  
Common

2 ☠  
3/1  
Illus. Randy Gallegos  
Flying  
Cloud Spirit can block only creatures with flying. Clouds are the soil, dreams are the crop. —Kor saying

#### Contempt

Enchant Creature  
Common

1 ☠  
Illus. Val Mayerik  
If enchanted creature attacks, return that creature and Contempt to owner's hand at end of combat. "Predictable little man. In all these years you taught me so much yet learned so little." —Volrath, to Starke



#### Dream Halls

Enchantment  
Rare

3 ☠☠  
Illus. Matthew Wilson  
Instead of paying the casting cost for a spell of any color, its caster may choose and discard a card that shares at least one color with that spell. If the spell has ☠ in its casting cost, ☠ is 0. Within without.

#### Dream Prowler

Summon Illusion  
Common

2 ☠☠  
1/5  
Illus. Richard Kane Ferguson  
Dream Prowler is unblockable as long as no other creatures are attacking. "To think that some find sleep a restful state." —Volrath

#### Evacuation

Instant  
Rare

3 ☠☠  
Illus. Rob Alexander  
Return all creatures to owners' hands. The first step of every exodus is from the blood and the fire onto the trail.





Enchanted creature gets +1/+3.  
 \* Return Conviction to owner's hand.  
*It was not the minotaur's shoulders but his soul that bore the heaviest weight.*



**Hidden Retreat**  
 Enchantment  
 Rare  
 2 \*  
 Illus. Terese Nielsen  
 Choose a card in your hand and put it on top of your library; Prevent all damage from an instant or sorcery. (Treat further damage from that source normally.)  
*After an hour in the hidey-hole, Squee seriously pondered the advantages of danger over boredom.*

**Honor Guard**  
 Summon Soldier  
 Common  
 \*  
 1/1  
 Illus. Joel Biske  
 \* Honor Guard gets +0/+1 until end of turn.  
*"It is not a choice I make, to have this guard. It is the choice of my people, and my duty to them."*  
 —Oracle en-Vec

**Lancers en-Kor**  
 Summon Soldiers  
 Uncommon  
 3 \*\*  
 3/3  
 Illus. Pete Venters  
 Trample  
 ☉: Redirect 1 damage from Lancers en-Kor to a creature you control.  
*Nearly all sets of Kor twins are trained as lancers.*

**Nomads en-Kor**  
 Summon Soldiers  
 Common  
 \*  
 1/1  
 Illus. Val Mayerik  
 ☉: Redirect 1 damage from Nomads en-Kor to a creature you control.  
*The Kor forsake roots for the winding of the path; forsake voices for the silence of the mind; forsake all else for the poverty of isolation.*



**Pursuit of Knowledge**  
 Enchantment  
 Rare  
 3 \*  
 Illus. DiTerlizzi  
 Skip drawing a card; Put a study counter on Pursuit of Knowledge.

Remove three study counters from Pursuit of Knowledge, Sacrifice Pursuit of Knowledge; Draw seven cards.

**Rolling Stones**  
 Enchantment  
 Rare  
 1 \*  
 Illus. John Matson  
 Walls can attack as though they were not Walls.  
*Walls collapse and kill people all the time. Some are just more aggressive about it.*

**Sacred Ground**  
 Enchantment  
 Rare  
 1 \*  
 Illus. Terese Nielsen  
 Whenever an effect controlled by any opponent puts a land into your graveyard from play, put that land into play.  
*"That which knows itself cannot be shaped to another's will."*  
 —Oracle en-Vec

**Samite Blessing**  
 Enchant Creature  
 Common  
 \*  
 Illus. Rebecca Guay  
 Enchanted creature gains "☉: Prevent all damage to any creature from any one source."  
*(Treat further damage from that source normally.)  
 Knit bone, darri flesh, Stitch skin, weave breath.*  
 —Samite healing ritual



**Scapagoat**  
 Instant  
 Uncommon  
 \*  
 Illus. Daren Bader  
 Sacrifice a creature; Return any number of target creatures you control to owner's hand.  
*"Enjoy your deception, Vuel," Gerrard said, as Volrath's features melted from the dead shape-shifter. "I'll count this one as practice."*

**Shaman en-Kor**  
 Summon Cleric  
 Rare  
 1 \*  
 1/2  
 Illus. Jeff Miracola  
 ☉: Redirect 1 damage from Shaman en-Kor to a creature you control.  
 1 \*; Redirect to Shaman en-Kor all damage dealt to any one creature from any one source.

**Skyshroud Falcon**  
 Summon Bird  
 Common  
 1 \*  
 1/1  
 Illus. Mike Raabe  
 Flying  
 Attacking does not cause Skyshroud Falcon to tap.  
*The falcon slits the sky to let the light drip through.* —Kor saying

**Smite**  
 Instant  
 Common  
 \*  
 Illus. Daren Bader  
 Destroy target blocked creature.  
*"You've got your childhood wish at last. Now you get to die."*  
 —Gerrard, to Volrath

**Soltari Champion**  
 Summon Soldier  
 Rare  
 2 \*  
 2/2  
 Illus. Adam Rex  
 Shadow (This creature can block or be blocked by only creatures with shadow.)  
 If Soltari Champion attacks, all other creatures you control get +1/+1 until end of turn.

**Spirit en-Kor**  
 Summon Spirit  
 Common  
 3 \*  
 2/2  
 Illus. John Matson  
 Flying  
 ☉: Redirect 1 damage from Spirit en-Kor to a creature you control.  
*Death free throat from thirst, mouth from speech, feet from earth.* —Kor requiem

**Temper**  
 Instant  
 Uncommon  
 X 1 \*  
 Illus. Matthew Wilson  
 Prevent up to X damage to target creature. For each 1 damage prevented in this way, put a +1/+1 counter on that creature.  
*"I don't need a plan, just a goal. The rest will follow on its own."*  
 —Gerrard

**Venerable Monk**  
 Summon Cleric  
 Common  
 2 \*  
 2/2  
 Illus. Terese Nielsen  
 When Venerable Monk comes into play, gain 2 life.  
*Age wears the flesh but galvanizes the soul.*

**Wall of Essence**  
 Summon Wall  
 Uncommon  
 1 \*  
 0/4  
 Illus. Adam Rex  
 (Walls cannot attack.)  
 For each 1 combat damage dealt to Wall of Essence, gain 1 life.  
*The ceiling and the floor fell in love, but only the wall knew.*  
 —Dal saying



**Warrior Angel**  
 Summon Angel  
 Rare  
 4 \*\*  
 3/4  
 Illus. Brom  
 Flying  
 For each 1 damage Warrior Angel deals, gain 1 life.  
*She represents not hope, but hope's desperate fury.*



**Warrior en-Kor**  
 Summon Knight  
 Uncommon  
 \*\*  
 2/2  
 Illus. Stephen Daniele  
 ☉: Redirect 1 damage from Warrior en-Kor to a creature you control.  
*Only a matter as vital as destroying Volrath could bring together the reclusive Kor people.*

**Youthful Knight**  
 Summon Knight  
 Common  
 1 \*  
 2/1  
 Illus. Rebecca Guay  
 First strike  
*"Let no child be without a sword. We will all fight, for if we fail, we will certainly all die."*  
 —Oracle en-Vec

## Artifact

**Bullwhip**  
 Artifact  
 Uncommon  
 4  
 Illus. Brom  
 2, ☉: Bullwhip deals 1 damage to target creature. That creature attacks this turn if able.  
*"Pain is a crude way to enforce obedience, but it is cheap and plentiful."* —Volrath

**Ensnaring Bridge**  
 Artifact  
 Rare  
 3  
 Illus. Pete Venters  
 Each creature with power greater than the number of cards in your hand cannot attack.  
*"I expected a fight, but I didn't expect it from the building itself."*  
 —Gerrard

**Heartstone**  
 Artifact  
 Uncommon  
 3  
 Illus. John Matson  
 The cost of each creature ability requiring an activation cost is reduced by 1. This cannot reduce an ability's generic mana cost to less than 1.  
*"Finding a true heartstone is even harder than finding a true heart."*  
 —Hanna

**Horn of Greed**  
 Artifact  
 Rare  
 3  
 Illus. Jeff Miracola  
 Whenever any player plays a land, that player draws a card.  
*"Rath grows, and I am nourished."* —Volrath

**Hornet Cannon**  
 Artifact  
 Uncommon  
 4  
 Illus. Ron Spencer  
 3, ☉: Put a Hornet token into play. Treat this token as a 1/1 artifact creature with flying that is unaffected by summoning sickness. At end of turn, destroy the token.

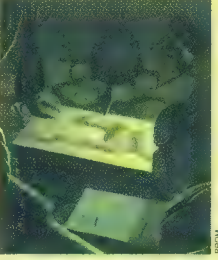
**Jinxed Ring**  
 Artifact  
 Rare  
 2  
 Illus. M. W. Kaluta and DiTerlizzi  
 Whenever any card is put into your graveyard from play, Jinxed Ring deals 1 damage to you.  
 Sacrifice a creature; Target opponent gains control of Jinxed Ring permanently.

**Mox Diamond**  
 Artifact  
 Rare  
 0  
 Illus. Dan Frazier  
 When Mox Diamond comes into play, choose and discard a land card or sacrifice Mox Diamond.  
 ☉: Add one mana of any color to your mana pool. Play this ability as a mana source.

**Portcullis**  
 Artifact  
 Rare  
 4  
 Illus. Kev Walker  
 Whenever any creature comes into play, if there are two or more other creatures in play, set that creature aside. If Portcullis leaves play, put the creature into play under its owner's control.

**Shifting Wall**  
 Artifact Creature  
 Uncommon  
 X  
 0/0  
 Illus. Michael Sutfin  
 Shifting Wall counts as a Wall. (Walls cannot attack.)  
 Shifting Wall comes into play with X +1/+1 counters on it.  
*"You'd almost think Volrath doesn't want me here."* —Gerrard

**Sword of the Chosen**  
 Legendary Artifact  
 Rare  
 2  
 Illus. Adam Rex  
 ☉: Target legend gets +2/+2 until end of turn.  
*One shard of Selenia yet remained.*



**Volrath's Laboratory**  
 Artifact  
 Rare  
 5  
 Illus. Brom  
 When you play Volrath's Laboratory, choose a color and creature type.  
 5, ☉: Put a token creature into play. Treat this token as a 2/2 creature of the chosen color and creature type.

## Multicolor

**Acidic Sliver**  
 Summon Sliver  
 Uncommon  
 \*  
 2/2  
 Illus. Jeff Miracola  
 Each Sliver gains "2, Sacrifice this creature; This creature deals 2 damage to target

creature or player."  
*The first silver burst against the cave wall, and others piled in behind to deepen the new tunnel.*

**Crystalline Sliver**  
 Summon Sliver  
 Uncommon  
 \*  
 2/2  
 Illus. L. A. Williams  
 Slivers cannot be the target of spells or abilities.  
*Bred as living shields, these slivers have proven unruly—they know they cannot be caught.*

**Hibernation Sliver**  
 Summon Sliver  
 Uncommon  
 \*  
 2/2  
 Illus. Scott Kirschner  
 Each Sliver gains "Pay 2 life; Return this creature to owner's hand."  
*Moggings have been known to play ball with hibernating slivers, completely unaware of their true nature.*



**Silver Queen**  
 Summon Legend  
 Rare  
 \*  
 7/7  
 Illus. Ron Spencer  
 Silver Queen counts as a Sliver.  
 2: Put a Sliver token into play. Treat this token as a 1/1 colorless creature.  
*Her children are ever part of her.*

**Spined Sliver**  
 Summon Sliver  
 Uncommon  
 \*  
 2/2  
 Illus. Ron Spencer  
 If any Sliver is blocked, it gets +1/+1 until end of turn for each creature blocking it.  
*"Slivers are evil and slivers are shy; And if you get eaten, then no one will cry."* —Mogg children's rhyme

**Victual Sliver**  
 Summon Sliver  
 Uncommon  
 \*  
 2/2  
 Illus. Terese Nielsen  
 Each Sliver gains "2, Sacrifice this creature; Gain 4 life."  
*"We are kinfolk," explained Karn to the silver queen. "Just as you need your progeny to complete you, so do I need the pieces of the Legacy to make me whole."*

## Land

**Volrath's Stronghold**  
 Legendary Land  
 Rare  
 Illus. Kev Walker  
 ☉: Add one colorless mana to your mana pool.  
 1, ☉, ☉: Put target creature card from your graveyard on top of your library.  
*The seed of a world's evil.*



## Okay, we admit it.

Our "Best of 1997" reader's poll in issue #20 was just a ploy to help us figure out which games the average *Dwarf* reader wants to play. You've foiled our nefarious scheme, however, because the results of our poll only show what a wildly diverse bunch you are. There is no such thing as an "average" *Dwarf* reader. In many cases, the difference between first, second, and third place votes was in single digits.

Anyway, here are some picks for the cream of the gaming crop in 1997, and maybe, just maybe, you'll take a moment away from congratulating your favorites to sympathize with the editorial staff as they do their very best to bring you what you want.

Enjoy,

The *Dwarf* staff

## A Trip to Hell on Gossamer Wings

Best Computer Action Game:  
**Diablo** (Blizzard Entertainment)

The sound and graphics presentation of this extremely frantic search-and-destroy game makes dispatching demons by the hundreds seem like a beautiful dream (at least until you face their noisome master). Hint: If you find you can't wake up, keep chanting, "It's only a PC game, it's only a PC game...."



Honorable Mentions: **MDK**, **Quake**, and **Tomb Raider**

Honorable Mentions: **Close Combat**, **Steel Panthers II**, and **Wooden Ships & Iron Men**

## Not Bloody Carnage, but an Incredible Simulation

Best Computer Simulation Game:  
**MechWarrior 2: Mercenaries** (Activision)

Forget about the 'Mechs themselves, FASA's world of ambulatory war machines is the true juggernaut of gaming. This version of "giant battle tanks with legs going head-to-head" is a quantum leap over **MechWarrior** in terms of gameplay, sound effects, and speed. We've saved you a seat in the cockpit, and only the best 'Mech jockeys need apply.

Honorable Mentions: **AH-64D Longbow**, **NASCAR Racing 2**, and **X-Wing vs. TIE Fighter**

# The Irregular, Multi-Color

## The Best Laid Plans of Mice and Men

Best Computer Strategy Game:  
**Heroes of Might and Magic II**  
(New World Computing)

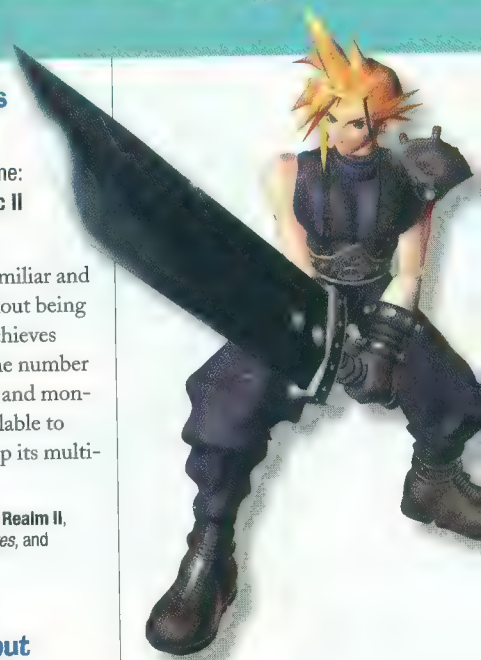
A near-perfect sequel is familiar and improves the original without being stale. This sequel nearly achieves perfection by increasing the number of characters (both heroes and monsters) and the options available to them, while also beefing up its multi-player capability.

Honorable Mentions: **Lords of the Realm II**, **Master of Orion II: Battle at Antares**, and **Warlords III: Reign of Heroes**

## War May Be Hell, but This Sure Is Fun

Best Computer War Game:  
**Panzer General II** (SSI)

Apart from The History Channel and the war itself, a computer gamer's monitor is the best place to see endless scenes of World War II carnage. Into this crowded milieu comes PZII, which established a new benchmark for detail, strategy, and blood-and-guts military heroism that the rest of the industry has yet to surpass. If you don't gasp at the beautifully rendered scenario maps, have someone check your pulse.



## Now That's a Big Sword

Best Console Game:  
**Final Fantasy VII** (Squaresoft)

PlayStation's blockbuster roleplaying adventure has so much action and spectacle (plus some off-track betting to help you relax) that you might not even notice the detailed plot—which would be a shame, since you'd also miss some of the best animation on the market.

Honorable Mentions: **Tomb Raider**, **Mario Kart 64**, and **Star Fox 64**



## The Best of 1997



## Running Five Rings Around the Competition

Best Roleplaying Game:  
**Legend of the Five Rings**  
(Alderac Entertainment Group)

Best Non-Wizards Standalone TCG:  
**Legend of the Five Rings:**  
*Obsidian Edition* (Five Rings Publishing)

Best Non-Wizards TCG Expansion:  
**Legend of the Five Rings:**  
*Crimson & Jade*  
(Five Rings Publishing)

impress new generations of readers, Iron Crown's Tolkien-themed TCG continues to impress gamers. This expansion's haunting depictions of Ringwraiths, Isengard, and the Lidless Eye itself were enough to make anyone long for a comfortable weekend in a cozy hobbit hole.

Honorable Mentions: **Legend of the Five Rings: Anvil of Despair**, **Mythos: The Dreamlands**, and **Imajica**

## Blowing It All Away

Best Wizards Standalone Game:  
**Magic: The Gathering—Tempest**

Best Wizards Magic Release:  
*Tempest*

ComStar to the front lines, and showed the high play value of a kick-ass paint job.

Honorable Mentions: **BattleTech: Counterstrike**, **Corporate Shuffle**, and **RoboRally: Crash and Burn**

## Picture This

Best Wizards Card Art:  
**Magic: The Gathering—Tempest**

Speaking of *Tempest's* card art (a major source of its appeal), it's hard to go wrong with old favorites like Pete Venters and Quinton Hoover, and fresh faces like Brom and Paolo Parente working side-by-side. Coupling the visual *tour de force*

Honorable Mentions (Best Issue): #17 (*Weatherlight*), #15 (*Visions*), and #19 (**BattleTech**)

Honorable Mentions (Best Cover): #18 (*Portal*—"Maraxus of Keld"), #17 (*Weatherlight*—"Mirri"), and #16 (*Fifth Edition*—"Phantom Monster")

## You and Your Folks, Me and My Folks

Best *Duelist* House Rules Variant:  
**Tribal Magic (#15)**

Alexander Blumke provided this constructed-deck variant that requires each player to choose a summon type around which to build his or her deck, with only spells that specifically refer to that chosen creature type. Readers overwhelmingly appreciated the

# ED Envelope, Please...

Don't You People Agree on Anything?

Introduced to *Duelist* readers in issue #16 as "The Best Game You Never Heard Of," L5R's inherent strengths capitalized on that brief introduction and went on to impress both *Duelist* readers and Wizards' top brass. The first TCG to truly integrate gameplay, backstory, and tournament results was followed by an equally strong and innovative RPG that allowed gamers of all kinds to fully explore its rich, textured gamescape. *Crimson & Jade* provided the penultimate chapter of the TCG's first complete arc and set players up to determine the end of the story at the "Day of Thunder" tournament and in the *Time of the Void* expansion.

Honorable Mentions (RPG): **MIB: Men in Black**, **Werewolf: The Wild West**, and **Noir**

Honorable Mentions (Standalone): **Middle-earth: The Lidless Eye**, **The X-Files: The Truth Is Out There**, and **Mythos: The Dreamlands**

Honorable Mentions (Expansion set): **Middle-earth: Against the Shadow**, **Star Wars: Hoth**, and **Star Wars: Dagobah**

## Feast Your Eye on This

Best Non-Wizards Card Art:  
**Middle-earth:**  
*The Lidless Eye*  
(Iron Crown Enterprises)

As Tolkien's masterpiece continues to



The major Magic release of 1997 captured the major share of our readers' attention. With the introduction of buyback, Licids, Slivers, creatures with shadow, and a plotline that was integrated into the card art, *Tempest* gave the whole range of players something to get happy about.

Honorable Mentions (Standalone): **Magic: The Gathering—Fifth Edition**, **Corporate Shuffle**, and **Magic: The Gathering—Portal**

Honorable Mentions (Magic Release): *Weatherlight*, *Visions*, and *Portal*

## Human Resources

Best Wizards Non-Magic Release:  
**BattleTech: Mercenaries**

'Mechs may be the most compelling (and fun) aspect of life in the 31st century, but it was the hired pilots that fired up our readership. *Mercenaries* put out the "help wanted" sign, brought the enigmatic

to the story didn't hurt readers' (or players') appreciation, either.

Honorable Mentions:  
**Magic: The Gathering—Weatherlight**, **Magic: The Gathering—Visions**, and **Magic: The Gathering—Fifth Edition**

## Aw, Shucks... You Shouldn't Have

Best *Duelist* Issue:  
**#20 (Tempest)**

Best *Duelist* Cover:  
**#20 (Tempest—"Selenia, Dark Angel" by Matt Wilson)**

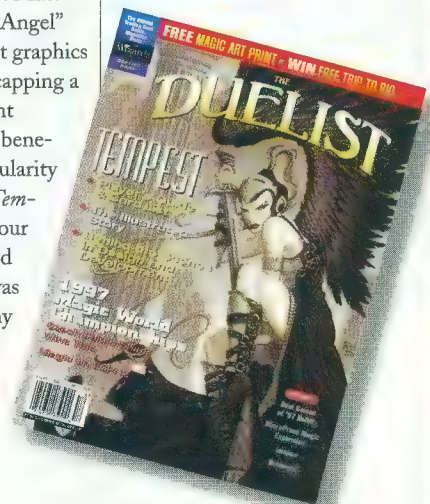
One category certainly influenced the other in this case, but Matt Wilson's "Selenia, Dark Angel" was easily one of the best graphics ever to grace our cover, capping a full year of strong, vibrant images. *Duelist* #20 also benefited from *Tempest's* popularity (it featured our all-out *Tempest* coverage, including our first-ever storyboard) and the fact that the ballot was actually in that issue. Any way you look at it, we're proud of that issue and we're proud of the response it got.

notion of Thrulls squaring off against Goblins, and Orcs taking on Soldiers, but personally, we like the very messy concept of Zombies mixing it up with Fungi.

Honorable Mentions: Toronto Draft (#19), Three-Card Challenge (#16), and Hong Kong Hodgepodge (#18)

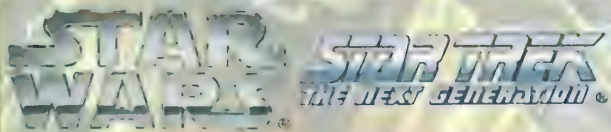
## And the Big Winner Is...

...Nick Paladino of Meadville, Pennsylvania. Nick's ballot was drawn at random by our independent auditor's firm of Dewie, Cheatam, and Howe. Congratulations, Nick. A box of *Stronghold* boosters is your reward and will arrive shortly. ✨

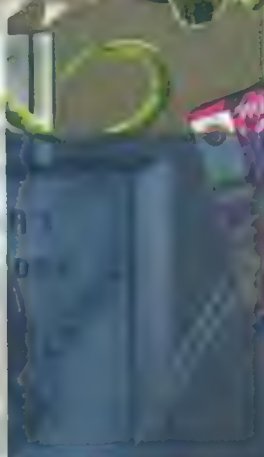


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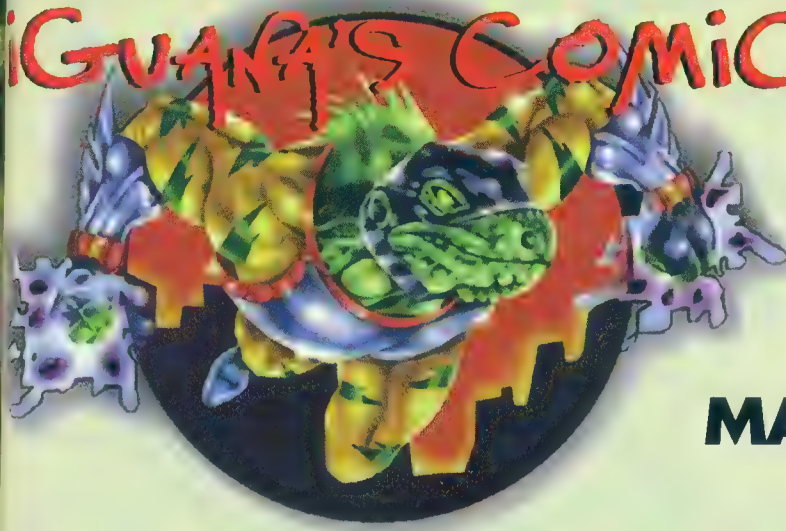
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Beta Boosters	\$124	\$4295	\$4895
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Alpha/Beta commons not listed			\$2.00
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Card Title	Color	Rarity	Alpha	Beta	Unltd
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Animate Artifact	BI	U	\$5.00	\$6.00	\$1.00
Animate Dead	Bk	U	\$6.00	\$8.00	\$2.00
Animate Wall	W	R	\$6.00	\$6.00	\$1.00
Ankh of Mishra	A	R	\$12.00	\$14.00	\$2.00
Armageddon	W	R	\$44.00	\$60.00	\$9.00
Aspect of Wolf	G	R	\$14.00	\$14.00	\$4.00
Bad Moon	Bk	R	\$35.00	\$42.00	\$8.00
Badlands	L	R	\$50.00	\$59.00	\$18.00
Balance	W	R	\$39.00	\$49.00	\$4.00
Basalt Monolith	A	U	\$6.00	\$8.00	\$1.00
Bayou	L	R	\$50.00	\$59.00	\$15.00
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Birds of Paradise	G	R	\$37.00	\$43.00	\$8.00
Black Knight	Bk	U	\$9.00	\$17.00	\$2.50
Black Lotus	A	R	\$395.00	\$409.00	\$299.00
Black Vise	A	U	\$17.00	\$19.00	\$1.50
Black Ward	W	U	\$3.00	\$3.00	\$1.00
Blaze of Glory	W	R	\$44.00	\$44.00	\$26.00
Blessing	W	R	\$11.00	\$13.00	\$2.00
Blue Ward	W	U	\$3.00	\$3.00	\$1.00

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Braingeyser	BI	R	\$27.00	\$37.00	\$9.00
Burrowing	R	U	\$3.00	\$3.00	\$1.00
Camouflage	G	U	\$7.00	\$8.00	\$6.00
Castle	W	U	\$3.00	\$3.00	\$1.00
Celestial Prism	A	U	\$3.00	\$3.00	\$1.00
Channel	G	U	\$3.00	\$3.00	\$1.00
Chaos Orb	A	R	\$89.00	\$109.00	\$69.00
Chaoslace	R	R	\$9.00	\$9.00	\$1.00
Clockwork Beast	A	R	\$14.00	\$14.00	\$2.00
Clone	BI	U	\$19.00	\$22.00	\$5.00
Cockatrice	G	R	\$17.00	\$17.00	\$4.00
Consecrate Land	W	U	\$14.00	\$14.00	\$9.00
Conservator	A	U	\$3.00	\$3.00	\$1.00
Contract from Below	Bk	R	\$9.00	\$9.00	\$2.00
Control Magic	BI	U	\$13.00	\$14.00	\$2.00
Conversion	W	U	\$3.00	\$3.00	\$1.00
Copper Tablet	A	U	\$12.00	\$13.00	\$6.00
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Deathlace	Bk	R	\$9.00	\$9.00	\$1.00
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Fastbond	G	R	\$24.00	\$24.00	\$7.00
Feedback	BI	U	\$3.00	\$3.00	\$1.00
Fire Elemental	R	U	\$4.00	\$4.00	\$1.00
Fireball	R	C	\$6.00	\$7.00	\$5.00
Flashfires	R	U	\$3.00	\$3.00	\$1.00
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Giant Growth	G	C	\$4.00	\$4.00	\$5.00
Glasses of Urza	A	U	\$3.00	\$3.00	\$1.00
Gloom	Bk	U	\$3.00	\$3.00	\$1.00
Goblin Balloon Brigade	R	U	\$3.00	\$3.00	\$1.00
Goblin King	R	R	\$19.00	\$24.00	\$3.00
Granite Gargoyle	R	R	\$24.00	\$27.00	\$7.00
Green Ward	W	U	\$3.00	\$3.00	\$1.00
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Instill Energy	G	U	\$3.00	\$3.00	\$1.00
Invisibility	BI	C	\$6.00	\$6.00	\$4.00
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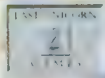
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# DUNE

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# Visible Means of Support

Reports on trading card games

**I**n my day, young whippersnappers [raps cane on floor], gamers had no customer support. True, some companies would answer inquiries phrased as yes-or-no questions if you included a stamped return envelope and waited a month. But in general, when not walking to school in knee-deep snow uphill both ways, we settled our rules questions the old-fashioned way: by arguing at the top of our lungs.

Wizards of the Coast opened its Customer Service department in late 1993. This, and the simultaneous rise of the Internet, has transformed industry attitudes. Now trading card game publishers—the good ones, anyway—provide answers that, if not always authoritative, are at least quick. These games are team efforts, both before publication and after. When you count the designers, editors, art director, print buyer, tournament administrators, demo program leaders, and netreps, a successful card game may require coordinated full-time effort from two dozen people, and sometimes many more.

"You've got to have great customer service to make it in this business," says Paul Brown of Precedence Publishing.

In *Babylon 5*'s 400-card set, "every one of those cards can potentially interact in a novel way with every other card. That's what makes these games an order of magnitude more interesting, and support an order of magnitude more necessary. Before the game was released, we lined up over 100 people as local reps. Now we get at least five people a day volunteering to help out. That gives us the ability to solve problems, make things happen—it's essential."

Fast becoming an industry standard, this approach contrasts with that of HarperPrism, publisher of the fine *Aliens Predator* card game designed by Precedence. Harper is supporting AP the way every leading book publisher supports its books: buy a lot of ads, then watch and wait. I hope this works, but nowadays [rap, rap] customers expect more.

by Allen Varney

**A**liens Predator (HarperPrism, New York City): Precedence Publishing, which designed the game on assignment, has posted three two-player scenarios (previously printed in *Scrye*) on their website, <[www.etsrinity.com](http://www.etsrinity.com)>. <[hprismcpg@aol.com](mailto:hprismcpg@aol.com)>; <[www.harperprism.com/ccg](http://www.harperprism.com/ccg)>

**B**abylon 5 (Precedence, Tempe, AZ): *The Shadows*, a 200-plus card expansion, will loom forth in April (12-card boosters with two rares, \$2.75). Highlighting the show's second and third seasons, it will feature new characters such as Earth President Clark, mad Centauri Emperor Cartagia, and a new version of Londo; Vorlon and Shadow capital ships, plus the White Star Fleet; and "a limited number" of Morden cards autographed by Ed Wasser, who played the *Shadows*' sinister agent. Play emphasizes chaos and battle.

Responding to early collation errors with the original edition, Precedence has a new policy: "If anyone has a problem with the boosters, send us the box's UPC code and we'll send [you] a random assortment of six rare cards," says Brown. If you bought five booster boxes and didn't get a complete set, Precedence will complete your set.

Precedence has filed for a patent on certain unspecified B5 rules mechanics, says Brown. "It's not intended to be a challenge" to Wizards of the Coast's Magic patent. "I'm glad they've got the patent, and as they say, it drives people to innovate. It's just that the industry has clearly changed." <[B5Events@aol.com](mailto:B5Events@aol.com)>; <[www.etsrinity.com](http://www.etsrinity.com)>

**C**hron X (Genetic Anomalies, Cambridge, MA): A free upgrade to this Internet trading card game appeared in December as *Chron X 2.0*, along with the first expansion, *Overture*. The 2.0 upgrade adds new chat features, user-created groups factions, support for organized tournaments, multiple rankings per user, and improved AI. *Overture* adds 145 virtual cards, including new headquarters, weapons and assets. Users can play games that include or exclude *Overture* cards. <[EdMartin@GeneticAnomalies.com](mailto:EdMartin@GeneticAnomalies.com)>; <[www.GeneticAnomalies.com](http://www.GeneticAnomalies.com)>

"You've got to have great customer service to make it in this business."

## GAME NEWS & UPDATES

[continued]

❖ **Dixie** (Columbia Games, Blaine, WA): "Many people comment and complain about the demise of wargaming. Columbia Games is doing something about it," says Columbia's Grant Dalgliesh. The company will send you two 60-card decks from its 1995 Civil War trading card game, originally \$8 apiece, free for the cost of shipping (\$4.95; \$7.95 to Canada and overseas). Write Columbia Games, P. O. Box 3457, Blaine, WA 98231; for credit card orders, call (800) 636-3631. Limit one order per customer; offer expires March 31. <grant@columbiagames.com>; <www.columbiagames.com>

❖ **Middle-earth: The Wizards** (Iron Crown Enterprises, Charlottesville, VA): This

month brings the *Against the Shadow: Player's Guide* (80 pages, \$14), written by InQuest Editor Jeff Hannes. April will bring Hannes's *White Hand Player's Guide*. An active April will also see Steve Ahrenberg's *Mordor Sites & Scenarios* booklet and a "Booster Box" carrying case with 56 booster packs from the various ME:TW expansions. Each Booster Box also contains 18 new cards, including English versions of nine promo cards previously released in Germany. These 18 cards will be available separately in ways still undecided.

Two major releases will hit in May. *The Balrog*, an expansion of more than 100 cards sold in the *White Hand* format (12-card boosters with two rares, \$3.25) will let you play the terrifying demon of Moria. The Balrog player wins by gaining marshaling points, and cards let the player achieve this by destroying various targets. Ahrenberg's Tolkien-related board game, *Elrond's*

*House*, uses a fixed deck of cards similar to ME:TW cards, but with different backs. Players move around Rivendell, solving problems using their characters. <ice@ironcrown.com>; <www.ironcrown.com>

❖ **Shadowrun** (FASA Corporation, Chicago): *Underworld*, the first expansion, should be out now (141 cards plus three promo cards, 15-card boosters, \$2.95). The basic game's second edition, **Second Running**, is also planned for March release. It rotates out 25-50 cards, mainly commons and Objectives, and replaces art on half a dozen others. New Objectives have the same themes as those they replace, so they fit easily in existing deck designs. **Second Running** also features three new promos in larger print runs than previous promo cards. One features Maria Mercurial, Fame-3 media goddess and star of an early *Shadowrun* roleplaying adventure. <FASAInfo@aol.com>; <www.fasa.com>

❖ **Star Trek CCG** (Decipher, Norfolk, VA): In January Trek fans helped Decipher's 1998 publication schedule via a survey on its website. They voted on three choices for set size and publication dates of two planned products based on the third Trek series, *Deep Space 9*: the two-player standalone **Launch System** (\$25 for two fixed decks of about 130 new cards), and a different (possibly double-sized) DS9 booster-only expansion. Results appear here next issue.

Incidentally, the long dormant roleplaying rights to all four Star Trek TV series recently went to Last Unicorn Games, designers of the *Dune* trading card game and the *Aria* RPG. Last Unicorn plans its first releases late this year.

❖ **Star Wars CCG** (Decipher): The 165-card *Jabba's Palace*, covering the first third of *Return of the Jedi*, is planned for late spring. The next releases include a *Special Edition* set that draws from the new footage in last year's re-release of the movie trilogy; then two more sets finishing out the the trilogy, *Endor* and *Death Star II*. Decipher is also looking into creating cards based on the Star Wars novel line, in advance of the new movie's release in May 1999—whereupon all existing licensed Star Wars products go off the market. <CCGCustomerService@decipher.com>; <www.decipher.com>

## electronic game news

❖ If you played *Mag Force 7: Wing Commander* card game or Origin's computer game series, save your money for the movie, being directed by *Wing Commander* creator Chris Roberts. A report in the showbiz newspaper *Lazy* claims that the cast includes Matthew Lillard, Freddie Prinze, Jr., Saffron Burrows, and Elise Neal as starship fighter pilots who uncover a conspiracy in their ranks.

❖ After a ruinous 1997, Acclaim Entertainment turned a profit in the first quarter of fiscal 1998 (which in real people's time ended November 30, 1997). The publisher of the *Magic: The Gathering Battlemage* real-time strategy computer game earned \$8 million profit on revenues of \$92.3 million in the quarter, largely due to the success of its Nintendo 64 games *Turok: Dinosaur Hunter* and *NFL Quarterback Club '98*.

❖ A study by *Computer Gaming World* magazine finds that "casual gamers" make up 86 percent of the computer gaming customer base of 32 million households. The remaining 14 percent, termed "core gamers," buy 52 percent of the games—an average of 24 games annually per core gamer. This accounts for \$810 million of total 1996 computer game sales of \$1.4 billion. "Although gamers are on their computers a hefty portion of the week," says the report, "they don't consider themselves loners, geeks, or nerds."

❖ In that case, they probably won't be interested in the newest development from the land of the Tamagotchi, Japan. As shown at the Hong Kong Toys and Games Fair this winter, "virtual lovers" need frequent gifts (flowers and chocolate), love letters, and dates at a virtual karaoke bar. If you maintain your cyber relationship, you'll get a kiss and maybe marriage. But if you get distracted from the "love letter" button—by playing computer games, for instance—your lover will flit away. Who says games aren't educational?

# Tomb Raider II

## Deftly Showcases Its Heroine

► by Robert Gutschera

### Return to Lara Land

If you've been following first-person 3D computer games, you probably know all about *Tomb Raider* and its Indiana Jones-style heroine, Lara Croft. In the original, Lara explored ancient ruins, dodged boulders, and shot attacking wild animals under the direction of glassy-eyed gnomes everywhere. In *TRII*, she's back in real time and you have a 3D over-the-shoulder view as you guide her through her daily rigors of running, jumping, climbing, and shooting. Between the game's 18 levels (each of which can take several hours to complete) are animated sequences that advance the plot, which revolves around Lara's search for the mysterious Dagger of Xian.

Of course, no bona-fide archaeologist's day would be complete without plenty of traps to avoid: spiked pits, swinging metal blades, rolling boulders, collapsing floors, and many more. Your time is split evenly between exploring, fighting various enemies (both animal and human), and solving puzzles—some of which require manual dexterity, and others that require finding and using various objects. Gameplay is fast, the scenery and animation are beautiful, and all you really need to get going is to start exploring.

The original *Tomb Raider* was a great game. It was just plain fun to leap around, shoot at things, and solve puzzles, and there was a wonderful



sense of place to the different environments Lara passed through. As you traveled from South American ruins to abandoned mines to Atlantis, you felt that you and Lara were exploring truly different worlds. *Tomb Raider II* goes in slightly new and different directions and has plenty of additional features. First of all, the graphics are better. Lara herself is less geometrically improbable, although she still looks more like a male fantasy than a scholar-athlete. There are new weapons and gadgets (the motorboat and the snowmobile are particularly cool—alas, still no motorcycle), Lara has some different acrobatic moves, and the enemies are smarter and more interesting. *TRII* is definitely harder than the original; even experienced *Tomb Raider* play-

ers will find plenty of challenges right from the sequel's first level. Players new to *Tomb Raider* may find things a little tricky until they catch on to the basics. Finally, the storyline has better pacing than the original, which ended a bit too abruptly.

There are still some problems left over from the first *Tomb Raider*. Too many of the puzzles are of the "pull every lever and push every button you see" variety, and there are puzzles that are basically impossible to solve the first time through (but result in Lara's death if they aren't solved). There's less of that feeling of slowly building tension as you walk among the ruins, wondering if something is going to leap out at you. Instead, the game is more action oriented, though still a long way from a pure combat game like *Doom*. The environments are more modern than those in the original, and have more people in them. At first I found this a nice change of pace, but after a while I became nostalgic for the sense of stalking through ancient corridors where no one had trod for centuries. I would have enjoyed more of a mix of ancient and modern, especially in the earlier levels. And some of the environments just go on for too long—the first level of the sunken ship is pretty cool, but by the fourth level I was wishing I was somewhere else.

Despite a few minor drawbacks and a change of atmosphere, *Tomb Raider II* will be a lot of fun if you enjoyed the first *Tomb Raider* and found yourself wanting to spend more time with Lara Croft. And if somewhere you never played either version, go out right now and try one! ■

*Robert Gutschera works in the Wizards R&D department and adds new meaning to the expression, "It's the quiet ones you have to watch out for."*

## Tomb Raider II

Eidos Interactive

### SYSTEMS REQUIREMENTS

Windows 95, requires Direct X 5.0 (included), Pentium 90 MHz processor (133 MHz or greater recommended), 16 MB RAM required (32 MB recommended), 4x CD-ROM drive required, 100% Windows 95 compatible sound card required, all 100% Direct 3D compliant accelerator cards supported.

### CONTACT

Eric Lindborm/Nina Ronstadt  
fdprl@aol.com  
www.eidosinteractive.com



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# Reload, Take Aim, and Fire

► by Mike Elliott

## Defiance Enters a Crowded Genre

The Avalon Hill game company was a pioneer in strategic board games and continues to be an industry leader. I spent many hours of my wasted childhood playing its games (okay, even a bit of my wasted adulthood). Recently, Avalon Hill has also put out several strategy games for computers such as *1830*, *Third Reich*, and the popular *Over the Reich*. Most of these have been above average. The latest offering, *Defiance*, comes from the new division of Avalon Hill, Visceral Games. This is definitely not the Avalon Hill with which I grew up.

The game centers on a weapons research facility on the planet Calchona. You belong to a "Corps of Planets" that is fighting against the Anterrans. The enemy has recently escalated the battle from impersonal space combat to hand-to-hand planetary battles. Fortunately, you just happen to be testing a new fighter ship—the LAV6-Saber—when the evil monsters

appear at your underground base to mix it up. (The moral: Don't build underground bases, they always end up getting attacked by monsters.)

There are four levels of play, ranging from "Easy" to "Insane," and since I have the coordination of a drunken rhino, I tend to opt for the former. The first level starts out with a training mission in the Saber, shooting stationary targets and maneuvering through an obstacle course. Your ship doesn't actually fly, but rather hops on command and scoots along the ground. The mouse and keyboard controls are somewhat awkward—I often found myself needing a third hand to operate them as configured. I tried reconfiguring the keys to make control one-handed, but my manual dexterity still gave me problems. The best bet is to play with a joystick.

Towards the end of the training mission, you receive a message that the base perimeter has been compromised. You're diverted to fight a flock of flying, bat-like creatures, and from that point on it's a big monster fight. As you advance to higher levels, which often requires solving simple puzzles, you fight tougher and tougher monsters. You also gain access to better weapons than the twin lasers you start with, such as a chaingun, fusion cannon, and various types of missiles.

One of the more annoying aspects of the game is the save feature. Normally, when I get a call from a gorgeous redhead or brunette asking me to come over right away (this happens all the time when you're a game designer), I like to be able to just punch a couple buttons and save the



game right there, whether I'm in the middle of a heavy firefight or wandering down empty corridors. In *Defiance*, you have to find one of the "save game" stations throughout the game, then bump the console with the Saber to open up the save menu. I know, I know—real gamers don't use save functions, they just start over from the beginning and get it right the next time. After being destroyed several times during this campaign, however, even the most confident will learn to go back to the save stations, despite the inconvenience.

The sound effects are a little better than the standard fare. I always enjoy good death sounds and realistic explosions, and this game did not disappoint. The game also offers standard multiplayer death-match options, and plays over the Internet as well as a local area network. It may be a good diversion for players that are tired of *Doom*, *Duke Nukem*, *Quake*, *Descent*, *Dark Forces*, and so on (hmmm, is this a saturated genre?). *Defiance* is a mild change of pace. Other than a few sound and graphic improvements, though, the game plays very much like the competition.

When all is said and done, I found reasonable entertainment value in *Defiance*. But I have been beaten to death with this type of game recently, and even responding in kind with the fusion cannon didn't improve my disposition. ■

*Mike Elliott is one red-hot bank of game design here—at least, that's what it says on the intro room wall.*

### Defiance

Visceral Production (a division of Avalon Hill) Baltimore, MD

#### FORMAT

CD-ROM for Windows 95. Minimum System Requirements: 90 MHz Pentium, 16 MB RAM, 2x CD-ROM drive, 30 MB HD space.

#### CONTACT

Mark Hall  
(800) 999-3222  
<www.avalonhill.com>



# A New Hope for Star Trek

## First Contact Rescues a TCG

**D**ECIPHER REBUILDS ITS Star Trek TCG from the ground up with the eagerly awaited *First Contact* expansion. Based on the eighth Trek feature film, this 130-card set introduces the Borg affiliation and new versions of the familiar bridge crew and their ship, the *Enterprise-E*. Time Travel Vortexes transport our heroes (and villains) to 2063 Earth, where they might encounter Zefram Cochrane and the *Phoenix*. New dilemmas, events, and "hidden agendas" fix several one-sided gameplay situations, and players are no longer limited to a 60-card deck. Battles at long last gain randomness, danger, and complexity. *First Contact* is literally a whole new card game.



"I am the collective."  
—The Borg Queen

The Borg are the first new affiliation in the game since its debut. Although the Borg may at

first seem too powerful compared to other affiliations, certain game mechanics prevent them from being overwhelming. Their outpost plays in the Delta Quadrant, currently inaccessible from the spaceline except by use of a Transwarp Network Gateway (a new doorway card). The outpost can "special download" (more on this later) one such doorway per game, but a total of three must be played to move a ship from the Delta Quadrant to the spaceline. This allows a quick non-Borg player to get going on mission attempts before the Borg can come over to spoil the party.

The Borg themselves are all genderless universal characters, with names like "Four of Eleven" and "Two of Eleven" (no relation). The notable exception is the almost-must-have Borg Queen, who is "neither Universal nor Unique." She carries all three of the Borg operation icons, although she can only use one at a time, and has other special bonuses. Borg ships are small and specialized (Scout Ships and Borg Spheres) or supremely powerful (Borg Cubes). Fortunately for every

► by Cory Herndon

other affiliation, the Borg must make battle their objective in order to attack.

*Objectives* are a new card type—many allow the Borg to score points as well as attack other affiliations, and there are a couple of non-Borg objectives as well. The Borg do not attempt missions, nor do they acquire bonus points. Rather, they "scout" missions targeted by an objective such as Assimilate Planet. Many objectives may be played as *hidden agendas*. Cards with the hidden agenda icon may be placed face down on your side of the table (either played or seeded) and then popped to have an immediate effect on the game.

"We would cease to exist."  
—James T. Kirk, "Metamorphosis"

Of course, the Borg are most notorious for assimilation. Provided your opponent is not also playing Borg, you may choose to assimilate a counterpart. One of the Queen's former counterparts is a certain *Enterprise* captain with an Ahab complex who went by the name Locutus. The Borg score five points for each red dot on an assimilated counterpart, then send that counterpart over to assimilate his or her homeworld. When a homeworld is assimilated, no more characters from that homeworld may be put into play (not counting Alternate Universe-icon personnel). If your Borg Cube is destroyed before you can accomplish that objective, simply go back in time to 2063 Montana and Stop First Contact. Accomplished on Earth, this objective causes all humans (and the Federation) to cease to exist. Finally, if that fails, you can Build Interplexing Beacon to contact the Borg of the twenty-first century and have them come over to assimilate the big blue marble. None of these major objectives are simple, but each could win the game for the Borg.

*Downloading* is a new mechanic introduced in this set that promises to alter the Star Trek TCG for the better. Downloading is the act of searching through your draw deck, hand, Q's Tent, or Zalkonian Storage Capsule and finding cards that

### Star Trek CCG: First Contact

Decipher, Inc.  
Norfolk, VA

#### FORMAT

130-card expansion set;  
7 cards per booster pack.  
For two players, playing  
time: 18-40 minutes.

#### DESIGNER

Decipher Design Team

#### ART DIRECTION

Decipher Art Team

#### CONTACT

Decipher  
115 Granby Street  
Norfolk, VA 23510-1111  
www.decipher.com



you may immediately play as ordered by the download card (draw decks are then reshuffled and cut). This allows for more frequent draw-deck randomization and faster play. Download cards include Retask, Awaken, and Assign Mission Specialists, among others. *Special downloads* are allowed by a new icon on certain cards, and suspend play at any time to allow a download of a particular card, once per game.

**"The line must be drawn here!"  
—Jean-Luc Picard**

Of course, if the *First Contact* movie were all about Borg, it would have been a very short film. Fortunately, our heroes were not too far behind. *First Contact* has the *Enterprise-E* and the *U.S.S. Bozeman* (commanded by none other than Morgan Bateson, *Frasier's* Kelsey Grammar) with boosted weapons and shielding against the Borg, and the Federation may attack the Borg at will. The new bridge crew looks great, although they can't staff much but the big *E* (thanks to a special *Enterprise* staffing icon), so stock that ship in your Q's Tent.

Feds and non-Feds alike may take advantage of hidden agendas like The Line Must Be Drawn Here, an event that penalizes players who abuse Kevin Uxbridge, Amanda Rogers, and Q2. The catch is that this card has a *countdown*—a number indicating how many turns the effect of the event can last. Mirror Image, another "fixer" event, causes all Red Alert, Kivas Fajo-Collector, and The Traveler: Transcendence cards to affect both players for a limited time. By including these two cards, a newcomer to the game may realistically compete playing a *First Contact*-only deck.

**"You're all astronauts—  
on some kind of star trek!"  
—Zefram Cochrane**

Before the Romulans and Klingons declare war (again), it bears mentioning that new non-aligned cards from the

twenty-first century boost the other affiliations in the game. Zefram Cochrane, whose *Phoenix* should only be flown if you plan to use its bonus points (it's far too weak to hold up in any battle), is a double-ENGINEER. Naturally, you'll want to pair him with Lily Sloane, who fulfills two staffing requirements on the *Phoenix*. Get them into warp and they can prevent the Borg Queen's plan to Stop First Contact. New non-aligned Vulcans finally

folks with only one skill are your Mission Specialists, so dust off those old Ben Maxwells and Ensign Giustis. If a Mission Specialist then helps accomplish a mission, score five points! Other "fixes" include Scorched Hand (an Interrupt that penalizes a player holding too many cards—a *la* Monnok from Decipher's *Star Wars CCG*) and Regenerate (fully repair a Borg ship or shuffle your entire discard pile back into your draw deck—this card could easily become as important as The Traveler).

The game designers seem to have learned a great deal from *Star Wars*, applying those lessons with renewed vigor to *Star Trek*. Nowhere is this more apparent than in battles. Personnel battles are now played out by randomly stacking all characters on each side, then drawing one at a time and matching them up. Depending on strength, the character with the higher power may stun or mortally wound an adversary, rotating the injured character accordingly. After this phase of battle, power totals are matched as before, and one character on the losing side, if any remain, is selected to die. Mortally wounded characters, of course, also die. Stunned characters don't add their power to the final total, but recover after battle. These clever new rules simply and effectively make fighting fun again in the *Star Trek* universe.

The *Star Trek TCG* has a shining future ahead of it—and while this new expansion addresses many of the earlier problems with the game, there is still plenty of room for growth (hopefully, ship battles will receive revisions similar to personnel battles in a future expansion). With *Deep Space Nine* on the horizon and no end to the *Trek* feature films in sight, this game should continue to surprise, entertain, and grow for many years to come. ■

*Cory Herndon assimilates Cheezy Poofs and Snacky Cakes like a Borg sailor on Ferengi shore leave. Resistance is futile.*



**First Contact is literally  
a whole new card game.**

grant non-Feds some Mindmelding ability. The Vulcan Lander allows you to put characters on a planet without transporters (by necessity—it doesn't have any) and also allows players to get around transporter-related blocks, such as Atmospheric Disturbance.

Many noteworthy new dilemmas appear in *First Contact*. Theta Band Radiation is a deadly Planet/Space dilemma that requires six ENGINEERS to cure. Lack of Preparation addresses the practice of "red-shirting" by throwing up a door if you attempt the mission without the skills to accomplish it. Balancing Act deals out a harsh penalty for playing an uneven ratio of planet to space missions, forcing players who go all-planet or all-space to level things out.

Decipher deserves kudos for one card in particular: Assign Mission Specialists. This objective, which may be seeded and then used once at any time during the game, downloads two different "Mission Specialists" to your outpost. Those poor



# CARD FIRST CONTACT LIST

Card Name	Card Type	Rarity	Card Name	Card Type	Rarity	Card Name	Card Type	Rarity
■ A Change of Plans	Interrupt	C	■ Establish Gateway	Objective	C	■ Retask	Event	R
■ Abandon Mission	Event	R	■ Fifteen of Seventeen	Personnel	C	■ Richard Wilkins	Personnel	C
■ Activate Subcommands	Event	C	■ Five of Eleven	Personnel	C	■ Salvage Starship	Objective	R
■ Adapt: Modulate Shields	Interrupt	U	■ Four of Eleven	Personnel	C	■ Scorched Hand	Interrupt	U
■ Adapt: Negate Obstruction	Interrupt	C	■ Fractal Encryption Code	Interrupt	U	■ Social Inequality	Dilemma	R
■ Admiral Hayes	Personnel	X	■ Geordi La Forge	Personnel	R	■ Sense the Borg	Interrupt	U
■ Alas, Poor Queen	Interrupt	R	■ Hawk	Personnel	U	■ Sevek	Personnel	U
■ Alyssa Ogawa	Personnel	X	■ He Will Make an Excellent Drone	Interrupt	U	■ Shinyrock	Interrupt	R
■ Android Headlock	Interrupt	R	■ I'm a Doctor, Not a Doorstop	Interrupt	U	■ Shot in the Back	Dilemma	C
■ Antique Machine Gun	Artifact	X	■ Inge Eiger	Personnel	C	■ Six of Eleven	Personnel	C
■ Assign Mission Specialists	Objective	C	■ Intermix Ratio	Event	U	■ Six of Seventeen	Personnel	C
■ Assimilate Counterpart	Objective	U	■ Jean-Luc Picard	Personnel	R	■ Sixteen of Nineteen	Personnel	C
■ Assimilate Homeworld	Objective	R	■ Joseph Travis	Personnel	C	■ Solkar	Personnel	R
■ Assimilate Planet	Objective	C	■ Kathleen Tonell	Personnel	U	■ Starfleet Type III Phaser Rifle	Equipment	U
■ Assimilate Starship	Objective	U	■ Lack of Preparation	Dilemma	C	■ Stop First Contact	Objective	R
■ Assimilate This!	Interrupt	X	■ Launch Portal	Doorway	U	■ Strict Dress Code	Dilemma	R
■ Assimilation Table	Equipment	U	■ Lightyear	Personnel	U	■ T'Pol	Personnel	U
■ Assimilation Tubules	Interrupt	U	■ Lily Sloane	Personnel	R	■ Temporal Vortex	Doorway	U
■ Awaken	Interrupt	C	■ Livu Aker	Personnel	U	■ Temporal Wake	Interrupt	R
■ Balancing Act	Dilemma	U	■ Magic Carpet Ride OCD	Artifact	R	■ Ten of Nineteen	Personnel	C
■ Beverly Crusher	Personnel	R	■ Maglock	Dilemma	C	■ The Line Must Be Drawn Here	Event	C
■ Blended	Dilemma	U	■ Mercy Kill	Interrupt	U	■ Theta-Radiation Poisoning	Dilemma	R
■ Borg Cube	Ship	U	■ Mirror Image	Event	U	■ Thirteen of Nineteen	Personnel	C
■ Borg Kiss	Interrupt	R	■ Mission Debriefing	Event	U	■ Thomas McClure	Personnel	U
■ Borg Neuroprocessor	Interrupt	R	■ Montana Missile Complex	Time Location	R	■ Three of Nineteen	Personnel	C
■ Borg Outpost	Outpost	C	■ My First Raygun	Dilemma	R	■ Three-Dimensional Thinking	Interrupt	R
■ Borg Queen	Personnel	X	■ Nine of Eleven	Personnel	C	■ Tommygun	Equipment	U
■ Borg Scout Vessel	Ship	C	■ Nine of Seventeen	Personnel	C	■ Transwarp Network Gateway	Doorway	C
■ Borg Servo	Dilemma	U	■ Obsolete	Personnel	C	■ Two of Eleven	Personnel	C
■ Borg Sphere	Ship	C	■ Ocular Implants	Event	R	■ Two of Nineteen	Personnel	C
■ Build Interplexing Beacon	Objective	R	■ One of Eleven	Personnel	C	■ Two of Seventeen	Personnel	C
■ Data	Personnel	X	■ Ooby Dooby	Dilemma	R	■ U.S.S. Bozeman	Ship	U
■ Deactivation	Interrupt	C	■ Patrol Neutral Zone	Mission	U	■ U.S.S. Enterprise-E	Ship	R
■ Dead End	Dilemma	U	■ Paul Porter	Personnel	R	■ Undetected Beam-In	Dilemma	R
■ Deanna Troi	Personnel	X	■ Phoenix	Ship	R	■ Visit Cochrane Memorial	Objective	R
■ Disengage Safety Protocols	Event	U	■ Planet	Mission	C	■ Vulcan Lander	Ship	U
■ Don't Call Me Ahab	Dilemma	U	■ Prepare Assault Teams	Objective	U	■ Wall of Ships	Event	R
■ Dr. Royce	Personnel	C	■ Primitive Culture	Dilemma	R	■ Weak Spot	Interrupt	R
■ E.M.H. Program	Personnel	U	■ Queen's Borg Cube	Ship	R	■ William T. Riker	Personnel	R
■ Eight of Nineteen	Personnel	C	■ Queen's Borg Sphere	Ship	R	■ Worf	Personnel	R
■ Eighteen of Nineteen	Personnel	C	■ Ready Room Door	Doorway	U	■ Zefram Cochrane	Personnel	R
■ Eleven of Nineteen	Personnel	C	■ Regenerate	Event	R	■ Zefram Cochrane's Telescope	Artifact	R
■ Eliminate Starship	Objective	U	■ Reginald Barclay	Personnel	R			
■ Espionage Mission	Objective	R	■ Remodulation	Interrupt	U			





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# Age of Empires

## How I Learned to Love the Nuke Trooper

by Shawn F. Carnes

People have made plenty of jokes at Microsoft's expense over the years. When a Microsoft game crashes while running on the Microsoft Windows operating system, you have to giggle and say "that software must be incompatible with Windows." Then you smash your PC. *Age of Empires* represents Microsoft's first venture into the real-time strategy game market, and, even if it isn't always compatible with Windows, it's well worth your money.

*Age of Empires* (AoE) has some serious mojo working. At the office we've been calling it "CivCraft," as it encompasses some interesting elements seen in both *Civilization* (MicroProse) and *Warcraft II* (Blizzard). In AoE, you represent the eternal ruler of a budding civilization. It is your job to reach the pinnacle of human advancement by constantly upgrading your civilization, researching various advancements, and improving your units' abilities. Bolder and broader endeavors make for more complex advancements. Your own civilization could potentially make the Roman Empire look like an overgrown renaissance fair.



AoE has an interface similar to *Warcraft II*, with some notable exceptions. First, AoE allows for the construction of a "Wonder" that grants you victory if it stands for 2,000 years of game time—a neat way to end a game that's taking too long. AoE provides timed games that conveniently list real-time and game-time equivalents. AoE also allows players to win by controlling all ruins and/or artifacts, so you don't need the biggest, baddest army in the world to dominate...you just need to play some focused "capture the flag."

Unlike most real-time strategy games in which there are only two or three factions, AoE offers a whole slew of races to choose from, each with their own unique advantages and disadvantages. For example, the Yamato tribe cavalry look like Babylonian cavalry, but they are functionally different: the Yamato cavalry can improve their statistics as the game progresses while the Babylonians cannot. One very annoying (and aesthetically distracting) aspect of the game is the Priest unit. Priests are specialty units that cannot attack other units directly, but convert them instead. The Priests can switch an invading force in your territory suddenly

into *your* invading force. Also, more advanced Priests can even convert buildings—yes, buildings—which allows you to stop your opponents' progress before it starts. Priests really slow down the game, mainly because you need Priests of your own to re-convert forces converted by your enemy. You may not wish to use them.

Also, the balance between the races could have used some more tuning. Admittedly, there are many subtle differences between the races that are hard to catch, but others really stand out. The Persians, for example, are the only race in the game that give you an inherent disadvantage (a 30 percent farm production penalty). They suffer unit restrictions similar to other races, so I don't understand why they take such a big hit on something as important as farming. Okay, maybe the real Persians weren't such hot farmers, but that limitation certainly makes me shy away from playing them.

Like other multiplayer games, players can play simultaneously with or against one another. A unique feature in AoE's multiplayer format allows two players to control the same civilization. One player can focus on many of the micro-management aspects of the civilization (of which they are plenty) while the other player handles the military. This is really stinkin' cool. It can create some confusion, however, as you lambaste villagers for not doing what you told them to, and then discover that your teammate had ordered them to do something else. It is not a foolproof function, but it is a booty-kickin' twist that marks a definite advancement in multiplayer fun.

*Age of Empires* has made me take notice of Microsoft's work in the computer gaming arena. AoE is by far the best game Microsoft has ever released, and it's going to become a classic. Is it as good as the granddaddy of them all, *Warcraft II*? It's more equitable to look at AoE as a unique "CivCraft" game. It's a great package unto itself, and one you should investigate. ■

*Shawn Carnes has an extraordinarily giving nature: attitude, grief, back talk...he frequently gives us his all.*

### Age of Empires

Microsoft Windows 95/98

#### SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

Windows 95, Pentium 90 processor or faster, 16 MB RAM, 80 MB hard disk space, CD-ROM drive, modem for Internet play

#### CONTACT

[www.ageofempires.com/](http://www.ageofempires.com/)



...YARMOOR [YELLOW] DEFEATS FLATLINER [BLACK] IN A SANCTIONED MATCH ON SOLARIS...

Stone -GrpW-> -----: Where did DW's Banshee go?

JT Chance -GrpW-> -----: It shredded my gyro!

I'm out! DEAD!

Stone -GrpW-> -----: I'm gonna need help

- who's left?

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# Ar-sen-al! Ar-sen-al!



## BattleTech's New Alternate Modes of Transport (and Mayhem)

BY ROBERT GUTSCHERA

**T**he battlefield in the 31st century is still ruled by BattleMechs and their pilots, but, as anyone who has played the BattleTech board game or roleplaying game knows, there are other contributors to the chaos and carnage of postmodern warfare. Among these are tanks, helicopters, and other military vehicles piloted by the Inner Sphere, and the suits of powered battle armor worn by the giant Clan warriors known as "elementals." Until now, vehicles and elementals have been represented by only a few token cards such as Hovertank Detachment and Elemental Point. With the *Arsenal* release, 25 new vehicles and half-a-dozen new elementals and battle armor units (the Inner Sphere equivalent of elementals) appear. With the release of *Arsenal*, the BattleTech trading card game will change forever as these new units are unleashed. There will be a host of new 'Mechs, missions, and pilots, and many other cards that will change the game's environment. And players will be able to explore both sides in the conflict with the introduction of Clan trials and Inner Sphere legacies.

The vehicles in *Arsenal* range in size from the 20-ton Warrior H-8 Attack Helicopter to the 100-ton Behemoth Heavy Tank. In game terms, vehicles function much like 'Mechs, but with an important difference: whenever they take damage, there is a one-in-six chance they will be completely destroyed due to their greater vulnerability to critical hits. So why would anyone want to play with them? Well, for starters, a vehicle will usually have better attack, armor, and structure values than a 'Mech of the

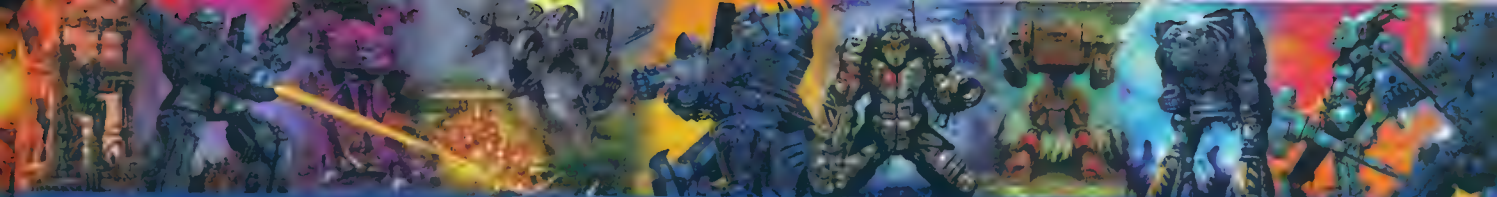
same cost, and vehicles have configurations that you just won't see on any 'Mech. Take a look at the SRM Carrier that has an armor and structure of only 1 each, but has an attack value of 9! Vehicles like the SRM Carrier won't survive close combat, but if you can keep them away from enemy 'Mechs and pound your opponent's Stockpile, you can rack up huge amounts of damage in a big hurry. And a lot of vehicles have useful special abilities, such as the VTOL (Vertical Take-Off and Landing) ability possessed by helicopters and gunships, which prevents them from being blocked by patrolling 'Mechs or vehicles without VTOL.

Clan players shouldn't despair at the thought of all this Inner Sphere firepower, though. The Clans will also get new elemental units in *Arsenal* that represent enormous, genetically engineered Clan warriors in groups of five, each wearing powered battle armor. These units don't generally pack as much punch as a 'Mech, but their low cost means a Clan player can get them out early and attack with them often, swarming before the other player has a chance to recover.

In addition to elementals, Clan players will get to try some new strategies with the introduction of the Clan Trial cards. Trial by combat is fundamental to the Clan way of life, and Clan decks can now reflect this fact by including cards such as Trial of Possession, which allows you to gain control of any one of your opponent's Clan cards, or Trial of Bloodright, which allows you to search your Stockpile for and immediately activate any pilot—without paying that pilot's cost!

Inner Sphere traditions are reflected in *Arsenal* with the new Legacy cards. Those familiar with the BattleTech universe will know the important individuals who lived before the period represented in the card game—people like Janos Marik and Maximillian Liao. For a long time the BattleTech TCG designers wanted to put these personalities on cards, but were stymied by the fact that they were, well, dead. But even so, their influence on the Houses of the Inner Sphere lives on: Janos Marik's Legacy makes all your 'Mechs cost 1 less to construct, and Maximillian Liao's Legacy allows you to activate Subterfuge cards at no cost. Each of the five major Houses has a Legacy card associated with it, and each of those legacies has a powerful effect on the game.

In addition to the big themes such as vehicles, elementals, trials, and legacies, there will be new Mission cards like Strength of the Bear, a Ghost Bear card that doubles the armor value of all your 'Mechs; new pilots like the O'Bannon sisters—if you play one of these twin pilots, the other one will join you for free; and new Terrain cards like Desert Wasteland, a very



bad place to overheat. And of course there are new 'Mechs, including the much-anticipated Koshka and Grizzly, and the Clan S series of close-combat 'Mechs.

Prediction is dangerous, but here are some things to watch for once *Arsenal* hits. Players will experiment with Inner Sphere vehicle decks, using the smaller and quicker vehicles for a fast swarm, emphasizing high attack-strength vehicles or special vehicle abilities like VTOL. With the new elementals, Clan swarm decks will also be possible, backed up by small quick 'Mechs like the Dabber or by inexpensive clan Clan 'Mechs like the Urbanmech IIC for less speed but more punch. Players may take a look at Houses and Clans they had been ignoring as they experiment with Legacy cards and new Mission and Command cards keyed to specific Houses and Clans. The number and types of different assets people include in their decks may change with the advent of Resources like Weapons Depot, which provides both Logistics and Munitions, and War Funds, which allow a player to search his or her Stockpile for any Resource card. Decks based around larger 'Mechs should become more viable as players experiment with cards that help them put several construction counters on a card at one time, such as Advanced Manufacturing Techniques, Resource Broker, and Diamond Will's. Diamond Will's has a one-in-six chance of being shut down by the cops every time you use it, but there's also a one-in-six chance you'll be able to construct any 'Mech you want for free!

So *Arsenal* has a lot to offer both the Clan and the Inner Sphere. Players will find plenty of cards they'll want to add to existing decks, but the savvy MechWarrior will be trying out completely new decks in an effort to dominate the post-*Arsenal* environment. With vehicles and elementals, trials and legacies, the battlefield will become a very different place for mayhem. ®

*Robert Gutschera commutes to work in a '69 Volkswagen with VTOL and guided-missile capabilities.*

## Who Needs 'Mechs?

### Vehicles (27)

- 4 Saladin Assault Hover Tank
- 3 Burke Heavy Tank
- 3 Galleon-3058 Light Tank
- 3 Cavalry Attack Helicopter
- 4 Lightning Light Hover Tank
- 4 Schrek PPC Carrier
- 3 Demolisher Heavy Tank
- 3 Behemoth Heavy Tank

### Resources (19)

- 6 Support: Logistics
- 4 Support: Munitions
- 5 Support: Tactics
- 3 Weapons Depot
- 1 Vehicle Repair Barn

### 'Mechs (5)

- 2 Cyclops CP10-Z
- 2 Gallowglas GAL-1GLS
- 1 Awesome AWS-8Q

### Support Cards (9)

- 2 Hidden Reserves
- 1 Defensive Embankment
- 1 Keith Smith
- 2 Front-Loaded Supply Lines
- 1 Final Push
- 2 Ramming Speed!



The deck name isn't entirely accurate, as the deck does contain five beefy 'Mechs so that you'll have at least a few units that won't blow up on a bad roll. But the core of this deck is definitely inexpensive vehicles you can get out quickly. They generally have high attack values (big damage) or VTOL (hard to block), or they can be constructed without using a deployment. There are two Hidden Reserves to help fill your hand back up after you've used the free-deploy vehicles or played Mission cards.

Notice that the deck doesn't use Assembly—just Logistics, Munitions, and Tactics. There are three Weapons Depots (the Resource that gives both L and M) to help you make sure you have the assets you need. You might want to try other Resource cards to get the right mix (such as Think Tank from the base set, ComStar Support from *Mercenaries*, or War Funds from *Arsenal*).

The deck is technically a Davion deck, but except for Keith Smith and the Behemoth Heavy Tank, all the cards can go in any Inner Sphere deck. So with small changes, you can modify this deck for your favorite House.

When you play this deck, attack early and often and try to overwhelm your opponent. Try to avoid getting into a stalemate. Remember that if you keep attacking your opponent, he or she will be forced to either take a lot of damage or to block and lose 'Mechs, and you probably have more vehicles than your opponent has 'Mechs. If you do get into a stalemate, you may be able to delay a bit and then play Final Push for the finishing blow, especially if you've done a lot of early damage. —R.G.

## Arsenal Credits

**Arsenal Design Team:** Shawn F. Carnes, Glenn Elliott, Robert Gutschera, Mike Selinker, Teeuwynn Woodruff, Tom Wylie

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# Card ARSENAL List

CARD TITLE	KEYWORDS	ARTIST	RARITY	CARD TITLE	KEYWORDS	ARTIST	RARITY
1. Advanced Manufacturing Techniques	Command • Resource	Kevin McCann	C	58. Lightning	Vehicle • Inner Sphere	Jock	R
2. Airdropped Supplies	Command	Colin MacNeil	R	57. Linebacker C	'Mech • Omni • Clan • Wolf	Kevin McCann	C
3. Bandersnatch	'Mech • Inner Sphere	Kelly D. Krantz	U	58. Mad Cat Pryde	'Mech • Omni • Clan • Jade Falcon	Hannibal King	R
4. Battle Armor Squad	Battle Armor • Inner Sphere	Mike Raabe	C	59. Mad Cat S	'Mech • Omni • Clan • Wolf	Hannibal King	U
5. Behemoth (Flamer Variant)	Vehicle • Inner Sphere • Davion • Steiner	Christina Wald	U	60. Magi	Vehicle • Inner Sphere	David Seeley	R
6. Berserk Elemental Point	Battle Armor • Clan	Thomas M. Baxa	U	61. Maximilian Liao's Legacy	Command • Unique • Legacy • Inner Sphere • Liao	Janet Aulisio	R
7. Black Hawk S	'Mech • Omni • Clan	Clint Langley	U	62. 'Mech Recall	Command • Subterfuge • Inner Sphere • Liao	John Matson	R
8. Black Lanner A	'Mech • Omni • Clan • Jade Falcon	Sam Wood	C	63. MechWarrior Peter	Command • Clan • Wolf	William Simpson	U
9. Blitzkrieg Elemental Point	Battle Armor • Clan	Tom Kyffin	U	64. Nice Grouping!	Mission	Tony Roberts	U
10. Bulldog	Vehicle • Inner Sphere	Tom Wänerstrand	C	65. Night Gyr C	'Mech • Omni • Clan • Jade Falcon • Smoke Jaguar	Colin MacNeil	C
11. Bulldog (AC/2 Variant)	Vehicle • Inner Sphere	Tom Wänerstrand	C	66. Nightshade	Vehicle • Inner Sphere	Dermot Power	R
12. Bulldog (LRM Variant)	Vehicle • Inner Sphere	Tom Wänerstrand	C	67. Nobori-nin C	'Mech • Omni • Clan	Dermot Power	C
13. Burke	Vehicle • Inner Sphere	Mike Raabe	U	68. Ontos (LRM Variant)	Vehicle • Inner Sphere	Mark Poole	R
14. Carpet Bombing	Mission	Franz Vohwinkel	C	69. Ontos-3058	Vehicle • Inner Sphere	Mark Poole	C
15. Castle Defense	Mission • Inner Sphere	David Seeley	C	70. Partisan-3058	Vehicle • Inner Sphere	Simon Gurr	U
16. Cauldron-Born Prime	'Mech • Omni • Clan	Patrick Beel	C	71. Pillager	'Mech • Inner Sphere	Doug Chaffee	U
17. Cavalry	Vehicle • Inner Sphere	David Seeley	C	72. Pinto	Vehicle • ComStar • Inner Sphere	Doug Chaffee	R
18. Chameleon	'Mech • Inner Sphere	Kevin McCann	U	73. Pouncer D	'Mech • Omni • Clan • Wolf	Mark Tedin	U
19. Chaos March Veteran	Command • Inner Sphere • Liao • Marik	Kevin McCann	U	74. Primus Sharilar Mori	Command • Unique • ComStar • Inner Sphere	David A. Roach	R
20. Combat Drop	Command	Clint Langley	U	75. Puma	Vehicle • Inner Sphere	Audrey Corman	R
21. Command Circuit	Command	Doug Chaffee	R	76. Ramming Speed!	Mission	Franz Vohwinkel	U
22. Coordinator Theodore Kurita	Command • Unique • Inner Sphere • Kurita	Zina Saunders	R	77. Resource Broker	Command • Resource	Jock	U
23. Covert Elemental Point	Battle Armor • Clan	Kevin McCann	U	78. Saladin	Vehicle • Inner Sphere	Thomas Milliom	C
24. Cyrano	Vehicle • Inner Sphere	Simon Harrison	R	79. Schrek	Vehicle • Inner Sphere	Thomas Milliom	C
25. Daishi S	'Mech • Omni • Clan • Smoke Jaguar	Joel Biske	U	80. Secret Buildup	Command • Inner Sphere • St. Ives	Chippy	U
26. Dan Allard	Command • Unique • Mercenary • Inner Sphere	D. A. Gregory	R	81. Shadow Cat A	'Mech • Omni • Clan • Smoke Jaguar	Ted Naifeh	C
27. Defensive Embankment	Command • Enhancement • Terrain	Tom Kyffin	U	82. Shadow Cat B	'Mech • Omni • Clan • Smoke Jaguar • Steel Viper	Ted Naifeh	R
28. Demolisher	Vehicle • Inner Sphere	Tom Kyffin	C	83. Skirmisher Elemental Point	Battle Armor • Clan	Sam Wood	U
29. Demon	Vehicle • Inner Sphere	Chippy	U	84. Sloth Squad	Battle Armor • Inner Sphere • Davion • Steiner	Simon Harrison	U
30. Desert Wasteland	Command • Enhancement • Terrain	Hannibal King	C	85. Spartan	'Mech • Inner Sphere	Pete Venters	C
31. Diamond Will's	Command • Resource	D. A. Gregory	R	86. Spector	'Mech • Inner Sphere	Paolo Parente	C
32. Doc Trevena	Command • Unique • Inner Sphere • Steiner	Tony Roberts	R	87. SRM Carrier	Vehicle • Inner Sphere	Colin MacNeil	U
33. Elizabeth O'Bannon	Command • Unique • Inner Sphere	Sam Wood	R	88. Steel Talons	Mission • Clan • Jade Falcon	Doug Chaffee	R
34. Enhanced IR Sensors	Command • Enhancement	Christina Wald	U	89. Strission of the Bear	Mission • Clan • Ghost Bear	R. Asplund-Faith	C
35. Ferro-Fibrous Upgrade	Command • Enhancement	Janet Aulisio	C	90. Suicide Troops	Command • Enhancement • Inner Sphere • Kurita • Liao	Thomas M. Baxa	U
36. Final Push	Mission • Inner Sphere	Hannibal King	U	91. Takashi Kurita's Legacy	Command • Unique • Legacy • Inner Sphere • Kurita	Zina Saunders	R
37. Fire Falcon A	'Mech • Omni • Clan • Jade Falcon	Franz Vohwinkel	R	92. Tanya O'Bannon	Command • Unique • Inner Sphere	Sam Wood	R
38. Fire Falcon C	'Mech • Omni • Clan • Jade Falcon	Franz Vohwinkel	U	93. Thor M	'Mech • Omni • Clan • Jade Falcon	Paolo Parente	R
39. Fire Falcon Prime	'Mech • Omni • Clan	Franz Vohwinkel	C	94. Tormano Liao	Command • Unique • Inner Sphere • St. Ives • Steiner	Jock	R
40. Fire from Cover	Mission	Clint Langley	C	95. Trial of Bloodright	Command • Clan	Christina Wald	R
41. Front-Loaded Supply Lines	Mission	Simon Gurr	C	96. Trial of Grievance	Command • Clan	Joel Biske	C
42. Galleon-3058	Vehicle • Inner Sphere	Kevin McCann	U	97. Trial of Position	Command • Clan	Janet Hamlin	U
43. Grendel D	'Mech • Omni • Clan • Smoke Jaguar	Andrew J. Hepworth	C	98. Trial of Possession	Command • Clan	Douglas Shuler	U
44. Grizzly	'Mech • Clan • Ghost Bear	David Seeley	C	99. Trial of Refusal	Command • Clan	William Simpson	R
45. Hanse Davion's Legacy	Command • Unique • Legacy • Inner Sphere • Davion	Zina Saunders	R	100. Uller S	'Mech • Omni • Clan • Jade Falcon	Sam Wood	U
46. Holovid Frameup	Command • Subterfuge • Inner Sphere • Liao • Steiner	Liz Danforth	R	101. Unlikely Love Affair	Command	Liz Danforth	R
47. Hot-Loaded LRMs	Command • Enhancement • Inner Sphere	Charles Gillespie	U	102. Vehicle Repair Barn	Command • Resource • Inner Sphere	John Matson	C
48. J. Edgar (MG Variant)	Vehicle • Inner Sphere	Charles Gillespie	C	103. War Funds	Command • Resource	Colin MacNeil	C
49. Jade Monkey	Command • Enhancement • Inner Sphere	Janine Johnston	R	104. Warrior H-8	Vehicle • Inner Sphere • Davion • Steiner	Mark Tedin	C
50. Janos Marik's Legacy	Command • Unique • Legacy • Inner Sphere • Marik	Janine Johnston	R	105. Weapons Depot	Command • Resource	Kelly D. Krantz	C
51. Jerrard Cranston	Command • Unique • Inner Sphere • Davion	Janet Hamlin	R	106. Yellow Jacket	Vehicle • Inner Sphere • Davion • Steiner	Kevin McCann	C
52. Jump Troops	Command • Inner Sphere	Jock	C	107. Zephyr	Vehicle • Inner Sphere	Kelly D. Krantz	U
53. Katrina Steiner's Legacy	Command • Unique • Legacy • Inner Sphere • Steiner	Liz Danforth	R	108. Zhanzheng de Guang Terrorism	Command • Subterfuge • Inner Sphere • Liao	William Simpson	U
54. Keith Smith	Command • Unique • Inner Sphere • Davion • St. Ives	Douglas Shuler	R				
55. Kodiak	'Mech • Clan • Ghost Bear	Sam Wood	R				

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by Wolfgang Baur



## The Front Lines of the Clan Coup

Let's take a peek at the Scorpions before they fell from grace, in the days when their clan champion was alive and their ancestral sword was unbroken, when they made their play to take the throne....

The *Scorpion Clan Coup* (SCC) expansion for the *Legend of the Five Rings* TCG arrived in three installments, called *Scroll 1*, *2*, and *3*. Each scroll includes about 50 cards, for a total of 151 cards, plus two new Stronghold cards. Because each *Destiny* pack contains eight commons and three uncommons, it's a remarkably easy set to collect; one starter and about nine or ten boosters worth of each *Scroll* are enough to finish your set. There are plenty of worthwhile cards in SCC to discuss, but let's look at some of the big trends first.

### Clan Affiliates

The number of clan-specific cards just took a big jump. These cards come in two categories: clan-hosing events and clan goodies. The hosers destroy broad strategies that particular clans depend on. The *Fair Voice of Lies* destroys most Crane and Scorpion decks' chances; *The Temples of Shinsei* nails Junzo and Shadowlands decks; and *First Scroll is Opened* is tough on Phoenix and brutal to Dragon and Naga. In many ways, the events accomplish what the various "Doom of..." cards attempted. The sheer number of these events will make *Avoid Fates* and *Seers* even more valuable mainstays of any deck that seeks to avoid being clobbered by the turn of a single event.

The clan goodies include items, followers, and spells that can only be attached to personalities of a certain great clan. The various Lieutenants—each of whom later rises to become a great clan samurai—serve specific clans (Morito for Unicorn, Diani for Dragon, Uji for Crane, and more). Of the 11 spells in the set, only

three are available to any shugenja; the others may only be attached to shugenja of a specific clan. A few cards like these have always existed, such as the monk items and the House Guards, but SCC has brought on a new wave, giving each clan access to a few special abilities denied to everyone else.

### New Victory Condition

The new SCC victory condition represents Scorpion control of the imperial capital and the death of the emperor—the very definition of a successful coup. Achieving it requires combining the four walls of Otosan Uchi—South and East from *Scroll 1*, North and West from *Scroll 2*—with the 38th Hantei Falls event.

Who does this path to victory favor? The answer is perhaps surprising; it's not the Scorpions, rather the splinter Crab of the Kaiu Stronghold. Their Stronghold's ability doesn't help pay for the walls, but it does provide a great foothold for any fortification deck. In addition, it's a natural for a defensive fortification deck that turtles up well and can win by honor (if all the Walls don't show up before the event). Also, the Crab ancestor and the Architects of the Wall are tailor-made for fortifications, and the new *Through the Waterways* and *Kaiu Castle* cards let you search your Fate deck for Walls to add to your hand. The coup victory is more viable than you might think, and is certainly more viable than an Enlightenment victory.

### The Shadow Stronghold

In the *Time of the Void* expansion, the Scorpion clan got a helpful boost from *Corrupted Geisha House*, *I Believed in You*, and the experienced Goshui. Now SCC has further improved the Scorpion clan's fortunes. In fact, there are so many good options for Scorpion clan players that it has become hard to choose. The Scorpion clan has dozens of valuable new cards in SCC, making them viable as duelists and slanderers, or even military specialists. The ninjas—close personal friends of the Scorpions—have gotten an infusion of new blood as well, and are ready to help their great clan friends on the sly. In fact, with good followers like *Soshi Ujomi* and two new ninja personalities, several all-ninja decks can be constructed.

Let's consider the new *Shadow Fortress* of the Scorpion. It produces more gold and a lower province strength than the old *Scorpion Stronghold*, enables you to win an honor victory, and lets you look at your opponent's Fate hand. This prompts a number of worthwhile combinations, such as playing the Stronghold with *The Obsidian Mirror*. The Mirror lets you bow the personality to name



a card; if your opponent has that card in his or her Fate hand, it must be discarded. Leave it to those sneaky Scorpions to cheat at the guessing game.

Several Scorpion personalities stand out, including the inexperienced Kachiko, Bayushi Yokuan, Shosuro Ikawa, and the (still-living) clan champion, Bayushi Shoju. The inexperienced Kachiko combines very well with that trusty Scorpion standby, Force of Will. Bayushi Shoju is expensive but allows you to switch Fate hands with your opponent. The dueler Bayushi Yokuan works well with Matsu Hiroru as follows: Yokuan challenges a personality to a duel; if the duel is refused, the personality is bowed, which means it can no longer refuse a duel with Matsu Hiroru.

Shosuro Ikawa prevents bad luck with Regions by switching Dynasty cards between two provinces. That is, Ikawa guarantees that your holdings always come up on the Crossroads, and that you can neatly stack one of each fortification in each province. In addition, Ikawa denies your opponent Regions and Fortifications.

## Notable Cards

With the release of *Scroll 3* on February 6, the *Scorpion Clan Coup* expansion is complete, and it's already clear that few SCC cards are destined for the back of the binder. It's not just a set for Scorpion and Lion players: Junzo gains another fine goblin shugenja, Unicorn gains a solid new cavalry samurai, and Phoenix and Brotherhood decks gain several new kiho actions. Dueling decks have also been greatly strengthened, with Crane, Lion, and Scorpion all picking up new duelists and related action cards. Conspicuous by their absence are any worthwhile Dragon dueling personalities, and the lack of any cheap Dragon personalities at all.

There's something for everyone in this set, and *Scroll 3* is on the shelves. Let's look at the most powerful and entertaining cards of *Scrolls 1* and 2.

## From Scroll 1

**The Secret Entrance:** This beauty makes it easy to slip past an honor-runner's guard. Its only problem is its high cost of four gold—reasonable when you consider its power. In many attack decks, The Secret Entrance almost ensures a second-turn province kill. Yes, you must bow your Stronghold to pay for it, but there's little your target can do to stop you.

**Garrison:** Garrison provides built-in insurance against The Secret Entrance. Honor-runners can use Garrison to use defensive cards when they don't have a personality at a battle. It lets you play Block Supply Lines, Entrapping Terrain, Encircled Terrain, and many others without committing a unit to the battle. It helps no-personality decks for the same reason.

**Lions Attack the Crane:** This extremely flexible card works in several deck types. In any attack deck—such as Lion or Junzo—this card combines well with Rallying Cry to give you two attacks rather than just one. Lions Attack the Crane forces opponents to attack you or dishonor their personalities. If opponents don't attack, they lose honor and you can destroy their personalities with Test of Honor or Force of Will. If they do attack, the attack results don't matter—you'll have the advantage during your regular attack because their personalities will be bowed.

**Honorable Mentions:** Political Distraction, Hantei the 38th, Soshi Taoshi, and Toturi is Drugged.

## From Scroll 2

*Scroll 2* could have been called the "Scroll of Yoritomo," as it has two important goodies for the Mantis Clan and its friends. Let's look at what got the Yoritomo's Alliance (YA) players drooling into their decks.

**Trading Port:** For anyone running the Port's money engine, this card fits neatly into several interlocking combinations with Pearl Divers, Takuni, and Daikua.

Because Trading Ports count as ports, they can increase Pearl Diver gold production to ten, and allow Takuni to reach 9 Force. Daikua (the scout who grants a Sneak Attack every time he attacks) requires a port, so Trading Port makes him easier to use. Against an attacker with a Port or Sailor in play, Daikua permits two actions before the attacker takes his first.

**Hasegawa:** A Mantis samurai that can be brought out with just the Stronghold for two personal honor is always welcome. He also has no honor requirement, making him valuable when recovering from a Breach, for example, or when you've used Yoritomo's "trade honor for gold" ability just a little too often.

**Defenders of the Realm:** Are you irritated by the speed and brute force of L5R's province-nuking events? Well, the metagame value of Desperate Measures, Evil Feeds Upon Itself, and The Return of Fu Leng—the classic province-nukers for attack decks—has just declined thanks to this new reaction card, which prevents a province from being destroyed by an event. Amusingly enough, it also shields Yogo Junzo from Evil Feeds Upon Itself.

**Honorable Mentions:** Dragon Pearl, The Ruby of Iuchiban, Face of My Enemy, and Fair Voice of Lies.

## The Coup Conclusion

We already know that the Scorpions' coup attempt failed, but playing in the days before the clan's fall is plenty of fun, regardless of the story results. Grab the *Scrolls* while you can; their print runs were small and the strength of the set has already won it many converts. You may curse the Scorpions, or you may align yourself with them—but you can't ignore them. ■

*Wolfgang Baur never turns down a game, never misses Gen Con, and never eats his Wheaties.*



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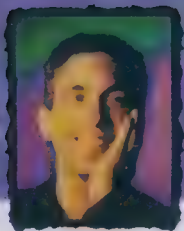


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DALE (BLACK/BLUE/WHITE)

# MAGIC THE PUZZLING



## Better Off Dead

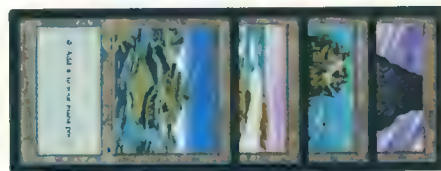
Your opponent is Dale. You and he are playing an all-*Stronghold* game. Dale has gotten a big jump on you with five fliers. Your *Constant Mists* has kept you alive, but has used up most of your land. This turn you drew *Revenant* and realized that victory was at hand. It is the start of your main phase. Defeat Dale without losing as well.

### DIFFICULTY

MEDIUM



Cloud Spirit  
3/1



Island (4)

### CARD HIGHLIGHTS

#### Constant Mists

Buyback—Sacrifice a land (*You may sacrifice a land in addition to any other costs when you play this spell. If you do, put Constant Mists into your hand instead of your graveyard as part of the spell's effect.*)

Creatures deal no combat damage this turn.



#### Intruder Alarm



Creatures do not untap during their controller's untap phases. Whenever any creature comes into play, untap all creatures.



#### Spike Breeder

Spike Breeder comes into play with three +1/+1 counters on it.

2, remove a +1/+1 counter from

Spike Breeder: Put a +1/+1 counter on target creature.

2, Remove a +1/+1 counter from Spike Breeder: Put a Spike token into play. Treat this token as a 1/1 green creature.



#### Wall of Souls

(*Walls cannot attack.*)

Whenever Wall of Souls is dealt combat damage, it deals an equal amount of damage to target opponent.



6 LIFE REMAINING



Skyshroud Falcon  
1/1



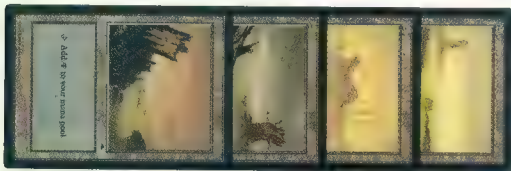
Spirit en-Kor  
2/2



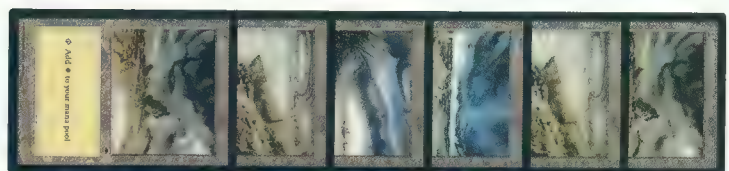
Warrior Angel (2)  
3/4



Wall of Souls  
0/4



Swamp (4)



Plains (6)

YOU (BLACK/BLUE/GREEN)

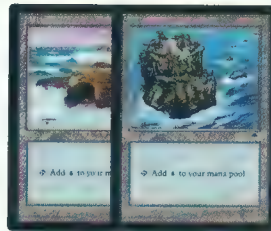
1 LIFE REMAINING



Intruder Alarm



Heartstone



Island (2)



Forest (2)



Volrath's Shapeshifter  
0/1



Skyshroud Archer  
1/1



Spike Breeder  
3/3 (3 +1/+1 counters)



Skyshroud Troopers  
3/3

YOUR HAND

YOU HAVE NO CREATURES IN YOUR GRAVEYARD



Stronghold Assassin  
2/1



Revenant  
\*/\*



Elven Rite



Constant Mists



# Playtesting 1,2,3

DIFFICULTY  
MEDIUM

Recently I ran across a drawer full of *Stronghold* playtest cards. It dawned on me as I looked at the jumbled mess that a player should be able to figure out what cards were in the pile merely by using the clues available. Be aware that a few cards were tweaked slightly between the final playtest and the release (most notably several names were changed). See if you can identify all 17 *Stronghold* cards pictured.



**SOLUTION** (*Stronghold* name in parenthesis if different than playtest name)

1. Walking Dream (Walking Dream)
2. Death Pact (Grave Pact)
3. Wall of Razors (Wall of Razors)
4. Horn of Plenty (Horn of Plenty)
5. Mirrored Wyvern (Silver Wyvern)
6. Sword of the Chosen (Sword of the Chosen)
7. Dal War-riders (Lancers en-Kor)
8. Calming Lull (Dauthi Rifter)
9. Spike Soldier (Spike Soldier)
10. Electrify (Shock)
11. Flame Wave (Flame Wave)
12. Volrath's Stronghold (Volrath's Stronghold)
13. Seething Anger (Seething Anger)
14. Feral Rage (Primal Rage)
15. Constant Mists (Constant Mists)
16. Dauthi Rifter (Dauthi Trapper)
17. Crystalline Silver (Crystalline Silver)



by Mark Rosewater

Step-by-step solutions to last issue's "Magic: The Puzzling"

# MAGIC TRICKS



## Splice of Life

Published in *Duelist* #23, p. 86

**T**This puzzle has two problems you have to solve. First, you need to deal 19 damage to Teeuwynn. When you add up the power of all your creatures, you get only 14 damage. You still need to find a way to eke out 5 more points of damage. This brings us to your second problem. Teeuwynn has five creatures able to block your creatures. The key to solving this puzzle is going to rest on your Serra's Blessing. This enchantment will allow you to both attack with your creatures and still use their special abilities. As you will see, the timing will be crucial.

### Pre-Attack Main Phase

- 1) Tap a swamp, plains, and two mountains to add one black (used as colorless), one white, and two red (one used as colorless) mana to your mana pool.
  - 2) Use one red and one colorless mana to cast Fire Whip on your Soltari Emissary.
- The Fire Whip will be used to both get rid of one of Teeuwynn's blockers and do an additional point of damage to Teeuwynn.
- 3) Use one white and one colorless mana to cast Hero's Resolve on your Infantry Veteran. It is now a 2/6 creature.

The Hero's Resolve is going to help produce your extra 5 points of damage once the Veteran's power and toughness are swapped by the Dwarven Thaumaturgist.

- 4) Declare your attack.

### Attack Phase

- 5) Declare all your creatures as attackers (Soltari Emissary, Bounty Hunter, Dwarven Thaumaturgist, Infantry Veteran, Jamuraan Lion, Serrated

Biskelion, and Southern Paladin).

Due to Serra's Blessing, none of them will tap.

Here's where the timing becomes important. Once you declare your creatures as attackers, they will attack regardless of whether they are tapped or untapped. Thanks to Serra's Blessing, you can use their special abilities while still attacking with them.

- 6) Tap your remaining five plains and one mountain to add five white and one red (used as colorless) mana to your mana pool.
- 7) Use one white mana to give Soltari Emissary shadow until end of turn.
- 8) Use two mana and tap your Phyrexian Splicer to move the shadow ability from Soltari Emissary to your Dwarven Thaumaturgist.

You want to move the shadow ability to your Dwarven Thaumaturgist because this will allow you to use its ability twice. This trick works as follows: You declare the Thaumaturgist as an attacker; you tap and use its ability; then you use Maze of Shadows to untap the Thaumaturgist

(since it is now a creature with shadow) and remove it from combat. The Thaumaturgist no longer does damage, but is now untapped and can be used again.

- 9) Tap Dwarven Thaumaturgist to swap the power and toughness of Teeuwynn's Horned Turtle, making it a 4/1 creature until end of turn.
- 10) Tap Soltari Emissary to have it deal 1 damage (via Fire Whip) to Teeuwynn's Horned Turtle, thus destroying it.
- 11) Tap your Maze of Shadows. Use it to untap Dwarven Thaumaturgist. Now it won't deal any damage in combat.
- 12) Tap Dwarven Thaumaturgist a second time to swap the power and toughness of your Infantry Veteran enchanted with Hero's Resolve. It is now a 6/2 creature until end of turn.
- 13) Tap Infantry Veteran to give itself +1/+1 until end of turn. It is now a 7/3 creature until end of turn.

You now have your extra 5 points of damage. The point missing due to the Thaumaturgist not attacking will be made up by sacrificing Fire Whip.

- 14) Tap Bounty Hunter to destroy Teeuwynn's Skyshroud Troll.
- 15) Use one white mana and tap Jamuraan Lion to make Fallow Wurm unable to block for the remainder of the turn.
- 16) Tap Serrated Biskelion to put a -1/-1 counter on itself and one on Teeuwynn's Seeker of Skybreak. Your Biskelion becomes a 1/1 creature while Teeuwynn's Seeker of Skybreak is destroyed.
- 17) Use two white mana and tap your Southern Paladin to destroy Teeuwynn's Rathi Dragon.

All of Teeuwynn's blockers can be removed by various special abilities on your creatures. You just have to be careful to use the right ability on the right creature.

- 18) Allow Teeuwynn to declare blockers.
- 19) Have your creatures deal their damage. You deal 18 damage to Teeuwynn (Soltari Emissary—2, Bounty Hunter—2, Infantry Vet-

eran—7, Jamuraan Lion—3, Serrated Biskelion—1, and Southern Paladin—3). Teeuwynn is now at 1 life.

*Post-Attack Main Phase*

- 20) Sacrifice Fire Whip to deal the final point of damage to Teeuwynn, defeating her.



## Look Before You Leap

Published in *Duelist* #23, p. 88

The most daunting problem in this puzzle is how to do 15 damage in one turn. By looking at your hand, you should see the answer—Minion of the Wastes. But to make this trick work, you need to raise your life total to 16 (allowing you to spend 15 of it to make a 15/15 Minion). You then are still faced with the problems of removing Bill's blockers and finding a way for your Minion to avoid summoning sickness.

- 1) Tap all your swamps, islands, and mountains to add seven black (three used as colorless), eight blue (seven used as colorless), and two red mana to your mana pool.
- 2) Use one black and four colorless mana to cast Extinction. Select "Drake" as the summon type. This destroys Bill's Flowstone Wyvern. You now have three black, one blue, two red, and six colorless mana in your pool.

The reason you choose "Drake" over "Lcid" or "Merfolk" is two-fold. First, you have a Lcid and Merfolk you need to use. Second, you have no other way

to deal with Bill's Flowstone Wyvern.

- 3) Tap Rootwater Hunter to have it deal 1 damage to Bill's Stinging Lcid, destroying it.
- 4) Use one blue and three colorless mana to cast Ray of Command. Steal Bill's Rootwater Matriarch. You now have three black, two red, and three colorless mana in your pool.
- 5) Use one red mana and tap Enraging Lcid to turn it into a creature enchantment and hop it onto Bill's Enraging Lcid. You now have three black, one red, and three colorless mana in your pool.
- 6) Tap Rootwater Matriarch to take control of Bill's Enraging Lcid. By stealing Bill's Enraging Lcid rather than using your own, you remove it as a blocker. Since Minion of the Wastes does not have trample, even a 1/1 creature could ruin your plans.

- 7) Sacrifice Bottle Gnomes to gain 3 life. You are now at 16 life.
- 8) Use three black and three colorless mana to cast Minion of the Wastes. Sacrifice 15 life to the Minion to make it a 15/15 creature. You now have one red mana in your pool.
- 9) Use one red mana and tap Enraging Lcid to turn it into a creature enchantment and hop it onto your Minion of the Wastes. Your Enraging Lcid falls off and is destroyed. Bill regains control of his tapped Enraging Lcid now enchanting your Minion of the Wastes.

As soon as Bill's Enraging Lcid turns into an enchantment, your Enraging Lcid falls off because Bill's Lcid is no longer a creature and thus no longer a legal target. No longer enchanted, Bill will regain control of his Enraging Lcid. But since Bill has no red mana to hop it off your Minion, the Minion will retain the immunity to summoning sickness and will be able to attack.

- 10) Attack with your Minion of the Wastes and deal 15 damage to Bill, defeating him.

*The black sedan arrives. The door opens. See you next month. I hope. \**

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by Richard Garfield



## Credit Where Due

LET ME ASK YOU a few questions. Who designed *Monopoly*? Who designed *Trivial Pursuit*? Now, ask yourself who wrote *The Shining*? Who directed *Star Wars*? Who wrote *Moby Dick*? Some readers of this magazine (and in particular readers of this column) may be able to answer the first two questions. I bet there might even be one or two of you who found the two game questions easier than the last three. However, to the vast majority of the general public, game designers don't rank anywhere near the level of authors or movie directors.

The companies that publish games get far more recognition than the actual designers of those games. To put this in perspective, see if you can recall the names of the publishers or producers of the above games, movies, and books, and compare how easy this question is to the one about designers, authors, and

directors. You will probably remember *Monopoly* is published by Parker Brothers more easily than you remember who published *The Shining* (which naturally I can't remember).

One reason game publishers are easier to recall than game designers is the lack of credit given to designers on their products. Although credit is usually given to designers in the adventure game industry, often this credit is not on the package, but instead is hidden inside the rules. Outside of the adventure game industry, it is common for a game to contain no reference at all to the game's designers. Now, compare this situation to the book trade, where publishers shout the author's name on the cover of the book; or to the movie business, where the director's name often appears in the advertisements as prominently as the names of the stars.

Even when package credit is given to a designer, this credit is often meager, as in the case of *Titan: The Arena*. This case leaps to mind because the game's author, Reiner Knizia, is believed by many to be the best game designer in the world. Yet, the credit given to Knizia is printed in the smallest make-your-eyes-bleed-we-legally-have-to-print-this font. You would hope a publisher would list Knizia's name prominently, along with a list of his other designs, so game players would see that this publisher believes it is using one of the best in the business.

The lack of credit given to game designers helps perpetuate the belief that game design is a commodity. I was shocked when companies in the adventure game industry told me the only thing that matters in a game is the motif; that

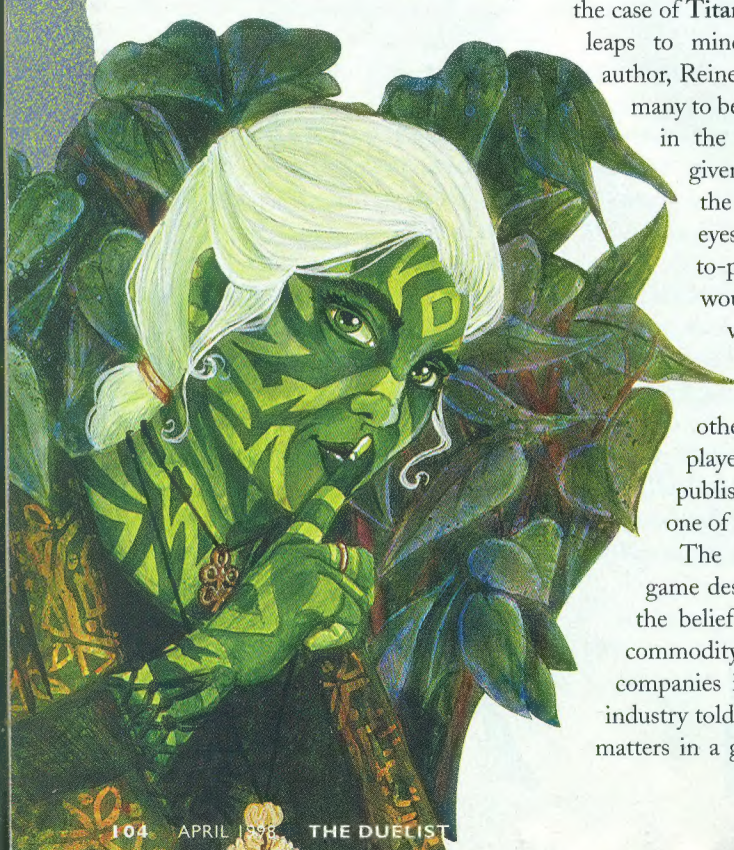
designs are easy to come by and just about anyone can create them.

This lack of credit hurts the industry by putting game players in the position of making less informed purchases. Players are denied the ability to invest their time and money learning new games by designers of games they liked in the past. Thus, players must purchase games based solely on a company's reputation, which can be a flimsy standard, because people routinely leave and join game companies. A company's attitude, motivation, and talent are less consistent than a single designer's. This also denies people the chance to vote *against* designers based on past performance. After reading a book I don't like, I'm not going to read another book by that author unless I get some rave reviews from folks I trust.

Another reason credit for the individual designer is valuable to the game is the matter of responsibility. If my name is on a game, I am unhappy if it doesn't meet a certain standard; much more unhappy than if I'm just part of the small print or not mentioned at all. A bad game reflects poorly on a company, but if you really want someone to be responsible for the success or failure of a game (or anything else for that matter), assign responsibility to a person, not a committee.

What can you do? Consider asking companies that produce games you like (or don't like) why they don't give package credit to their designers like the credit authors receive on their own books. I believe the quality of game design would rise if designers' names were boldly attached to their games, rather than hidden away or eliminated by corporations attempting to build up the company's name or product line. 🌳

Richard Garfield is happy to work for a company that recognizes the value of game designers.



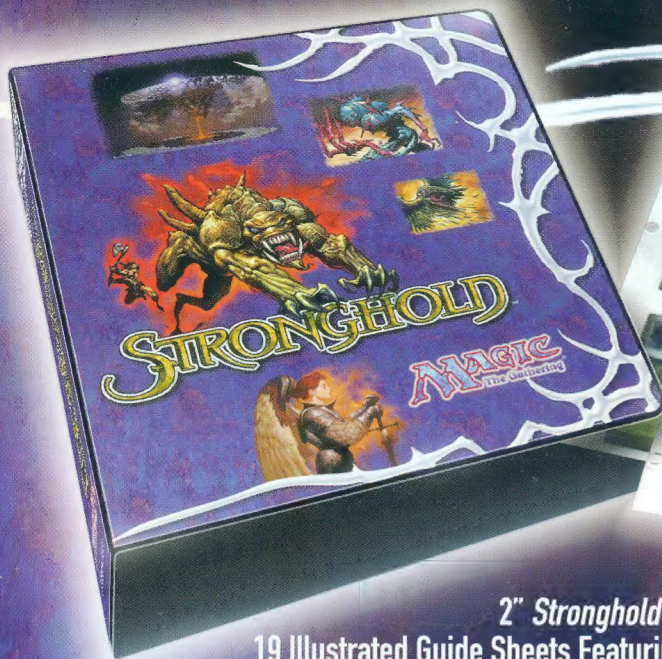
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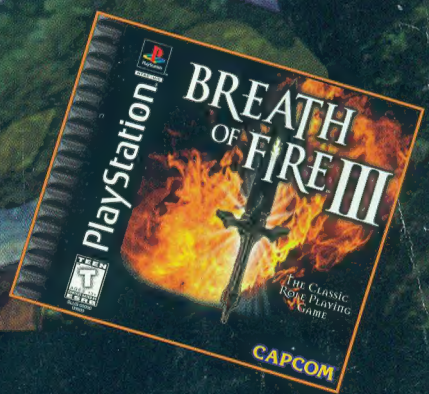
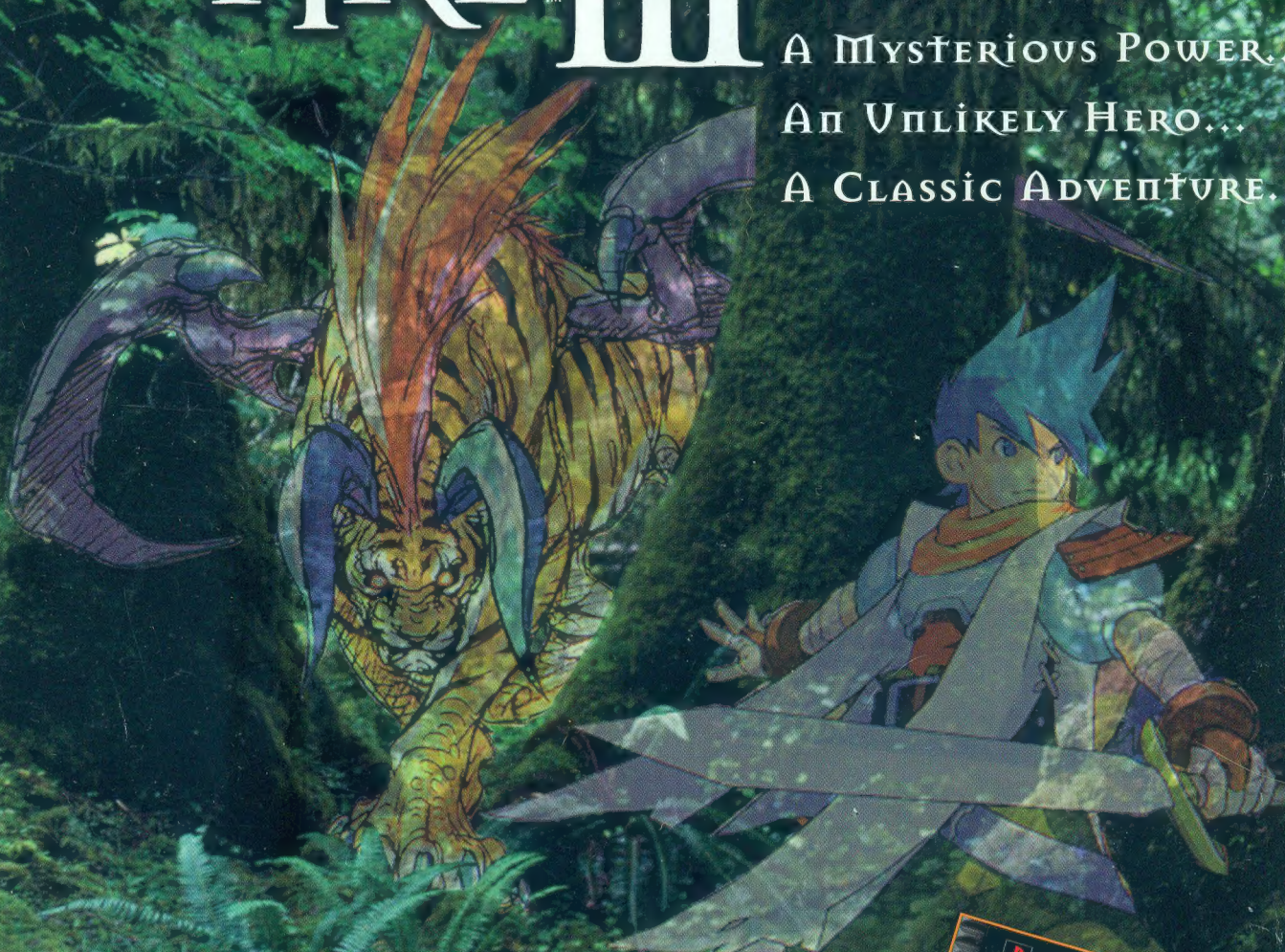
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